SUNDAY
May 26, 2024

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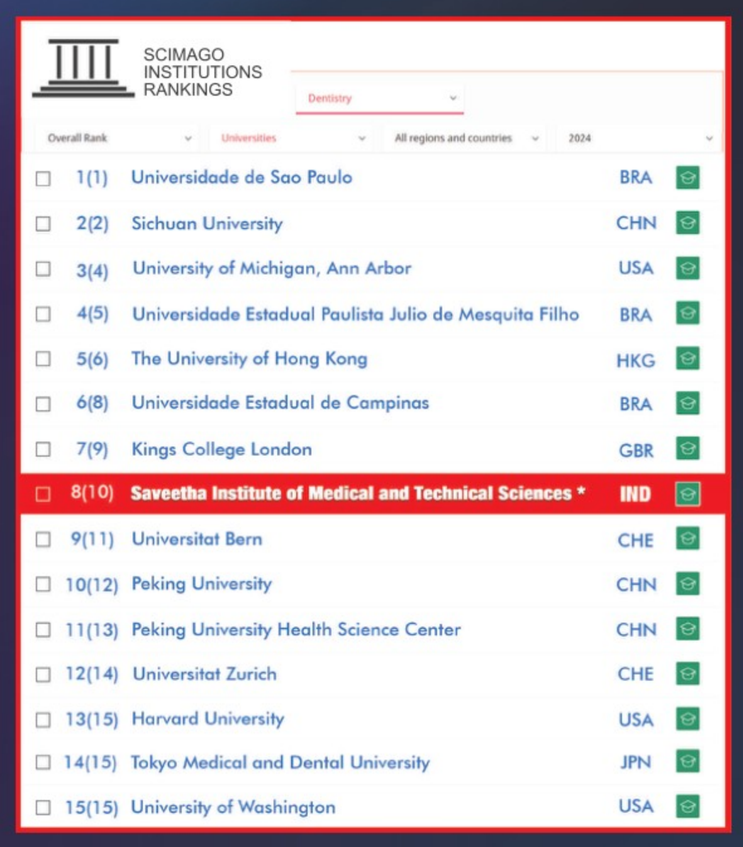
SCIMAGO INSTITUTIONS RANKINGS
Dentistry
Overall Rank
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2(2) Sichuan University CHN
3(4) University of Michigan, Ann Arbor USA
4(5) Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio de Mesquita Filho BRA
5(6) The University of Hong Kong HKG
6(8) Universidade Estadual de Campinas BRA
7(9) Kings College London GBR
8(10) Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences * IND
9(11) Universitat Bern CHE
10(12) Peking University CHN
11(13) Peking University Health Science Center CHN
12(14) Universitat Zurich CHE
13(15) Harvard University USA
14(15) Tokyo Medical and Dental University JPN
15(15) University of Washington USA

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SUBJECT RATINGS

PLATINUM + Medicine
QS I-GAUGE
SUBJECT RATINGS

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SDG 12 : Responsible consumption and Production 44

Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023
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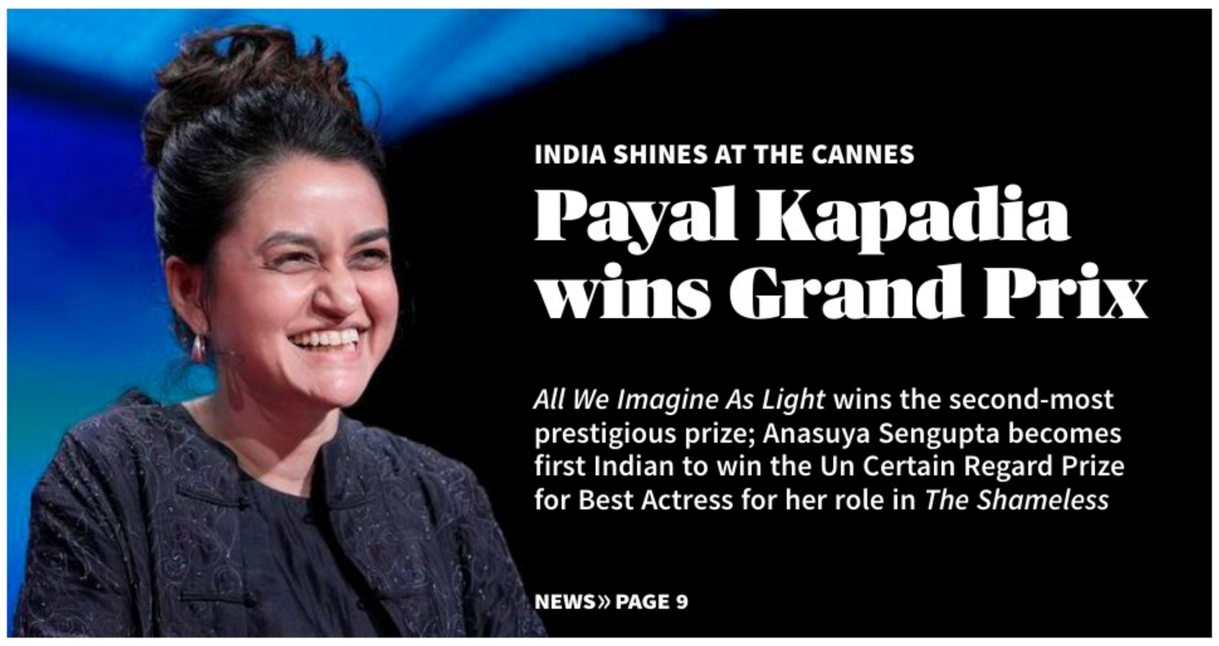

INDIA SHINES AT THE CANNES

Payal Kapadia wins Grand Prix

All We Imagine As Light wins the second-most prestigious prize; Anasuya Sengupta becomes first Indian to win the Un Certain Regard Prize for Best Actress for her role in *The Shameless*

NEWS» PAGE 9

Cyclone Remal to cross Bengal, Bangladesh coast today

NEWS » PAGE 7

African National Congress faces a tough test in South Africa polls

PROFILES » PAGE 13

Knight Riders and Sunrisers battle for bragging rights

SPORT » PAGE 15

NEARBY

Auto drivers' move raises safety concerns

BENGALURU
In the city many passengers have been complaining that they are seeing autorickshaw drivers displaying multiple registration number plates on their vehicles.
This practice has raised concerns among passengers about safety and legality.
» Page 2

DKS likely to stay as KPCC chief

BENGALURU
Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who has completed four years as president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), is expected to continue in the party post at least for one more year. » Page 4

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EC releases absolute number of votes cast in five phases of polls

Votes polled in a constituency are already recorded in Form 17C and cannot be altered, it says; civil society groups welcome release of data

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday released the absolute number of votes cast in each constituency in the first five phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

This is the first time that the EC has shared the total number of votes cast in this election.

The commission came out with the data a day after the Supreme Court refused to direct it to disclose details of Form 17 C, which contains voter turnout data at the booth level and is handed out to all the polling agents of the candidates, as had been demanded by the NGO, Association for Democratic Reforms, in its petition.

In an affidavit filed before the top court earlier this week, the commission had said that there was a "design, a pattern" at play in the petitioners' approach.

In a statement on Saturday, the EC reiterated this. "The commission notes the pattern of false narratives and mischievous design to vitiate electoral process," it said.

The poll panel asserted that the total number of votes polled in a constituency, as recorded in Form 17C, can never be changed even by anyone's "hypothetical mischief", as it is available with all the candidates [agents].

Civil society organisations welcomed the release of the data.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

Clearing the air

According to the EC, 50.72 crore (66.39%) of the 76.4 crore eligible voters cast their votes in the first five phases of the Lok Sabha election. A phase-wise breakup:

Phase	Count of electors (in crore)	Count of votes (in crore)
1	16.6	11.0
2	15.8	10.6
3	17.2	11.3
4	17.7	12.2
5	8.9	5.6

61.2% voting in 6th phase of LS polls

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The sixth and penultimate phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha election saw a voter turnout of 61.20% till 11.45 p.m. on Saturday. Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from West Bengal which reported the highest polling percentage at 79.47.

Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri seat recorded a turnout of 54.30%, which the Election Commission said was the highest in many decades for the constituency.

Urban apathy continued in the seven seats of Delhi where just 57.67% of the electorate voted, a figure which many said was due to the searing heatwave prevailing in North India. Haryana, where all the 10 Lok Sabha seats voted, saw a turnout of 60.4%.

The national capital saw an array of high-profile voters exercise their franchise, including President Droupadi Murmu, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

The turnout in Uttar Pradesh, where 14 seats went to the polls, was the lowest at 54.03%. Odisha and Jharkhand recorded polling of 69.56% and 63.76% respectively. The turnout in Bihar was 55.24%.

Onto the last lap: People queue up to cast their vote at Jaffarabad in New Delhi on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7
MORE REPORTS » PAGE 8

Mob targets police station after man dies in custody at Channagiri; 11 personnel injured

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

The death of a person detained by the police resulted in an angry mob vandalising the Channagiri police station in Davangere district on Friday night.

Totally, 11 police personnel were injured and police vehicles damaged in the stone pelting. Trouble started after news about the death of Adil, 32, who was brought to the station by the Channagiri police on gambling charges, spread. A mob gathered outside the station and called it a lock-up death.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

The police vehicle damaged by a mob at Channagiri on Friday night. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

27 killed in blaze at Rajkot gaming zone

The massive fire at a gaming zone in Rajkot. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

At least 27 people were killed in a fire at a sprawling children's game zone built in a temporary structure in Rajkot on Saturday. More bodies are feared trapped in the debris that has not been cleared.

Sources said the fire engulfed the arena, TRP Game Zone, within minutes. There were no fire extinguishers and emergency exits at the venue. It is not known if the play zone had taken a no-objection certificate from the State's fire department, said sources.

The State government has constituted a probe team to ascertain whether the game zone had the necessary licences from the authorities.

"There is no clarity about how many people were inside and what caused the fire," a senior official from Rajkot told *The Hindu*. "Since it is vacation and weekend, the place became overcrowded and the management did not restrict the number of people inside the building."

Due to extreme heat, the temporary structures collapsed aggravating the situation. There were over a dozen air conditioners installed at the venue. The AC compressors were hanging from the temporary walls and structures.

The bodies retrieved were completely charred and DNA tests will be conducted to determine their identities. All the bodies have been taken to the Rajkot Civil Hospital.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi expressed grief over the tragedy.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

NMC nod sought for NRI quota medical seats in govt. colleges

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

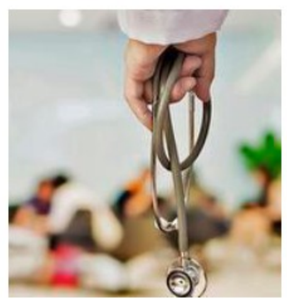
With an eye on resource mobilisation, the State government is keen to introduce Non-Resident Indian (NRI) quota for seats in government medical colleges. At present, NRI quota seats are available only in private medical colleges and the fee for these seats is between ₹25 lakh and ₹50 lakh annually, a major source of revenue for these colleges.

The Directorate of Medical Education has submitted a proposal to the National Medical Commission (NMC) seeking approval to introduce NRI quota in government medical colleges as well in the State. The Directorate had sought clearance for the same last year too, but did not get it.

"Last year too, we submitted a proposal to the NMC for the introduction of NRI quota seats in government medical colleges. However, the seats were not sanctioned. This time also, a proposal has been submitted to the NMC and we expect we will get it cleared in time for admissions for 2024-25," said B.L. Sujatha Rathod, Director, Directorate of Medical Education.

24 govt. colleges

A total of 24 government medical colleges, 36 private medical colleges, and six deemed medical colleges are functioning in the State and a total of 11,020 medical seats are available in these institutions for the academic year 2023-24. There is a 15% NRI quota seats in all private medical colleges and last year 2,338 seats were filled under this quota. The intention of offering NRI quota seats in government medical colleges is to strengthen these colleges financially through the fee for these seats, sources said.



At present, NRI quota seats are available only in private medical colleges. FILE PHOTO

'Meagre fee'

"Every year, the government is investing crores of money on government medical colleges for providing quality education and good infrastructure. However, the fee it charges is meagre. This makes it difficult to provide good medical infrastructure, including laboratories, new medical equipment, and cutting-edge technologies," a senior official said.

> NRI quota seats will be a good source of revenue for government medical colleges. Even if the NMC allows 5% of NRI quota seats, it will help these colleges improve themselves. These seats will be allotted to meritorious NRI students.
>
> **B.L. SUJATHA RATHOD,** Director, Directorate of Medical Education

Currently, the fee structure for government quota medical seats in government medical colleges in the State range from ₹59,350 to ₹71,375 per annum. The fee for a NRI quota seat in private colleges costs anywhere between ₹25 lakh and ₹50 lakh. The State government is yet to decide on the fee for NRI quota seats in government medical colleges, if allowed.

"NRI quota seats will be a good source of revenue for government medical colleges. Even if NMC allows 5% of NRI quota seats, it will help these colleges improve themselves. These seats will be allotted to meritorious NRI students," explained Dr. Rathod.

Beating the heat: A supporter of the Congress takes a swig of water during an election rally at Lakhani in Banaskantha, Gujarat on May 4. VIJAY SONEJI

Little respite: Polling officials in Bhopal cover themselves with *dupattas* before leaving for election duty during the third phase of polls on May 6. A.M. FARUQUI

Long way: Women walk home through a desert area after casting their vote during the second phase of the election in Barmer, Rajasthan on April 26. REUTERS

Poll scorcher

Involving over 96.88 crore registered voters and more than 1.5 crore polling staff, the world's largest and most expensive democratic process braves the heat as it approaches its final lap; long queues and the blazing sun were challenges but the Election Commission's arrangements for extra water supplies and ORS provided some relief

India's 2024 Lok Sabha election will involve over 96.88 crore registered voters, and the election, when it is over, would have spanned over 43 days, with an estimated 1.5 crore polling staff engaged in the process. Security personnel drafted for the purpose are over and above this.

Without doubt, this is the world's largest democratic exercise, with the voting population much more than the combined population of the U.S., and the European Union. From Kanniyakumari in the deep south to the Kashmir Valley in the Himalayas and from Manipur in the east to the Thar desert in Rajasthan, this election is expected to be the world's most expensive.

Cut to the voting itself, where long-winding queues would be no less than a scene at a first day, first show of a blockbuster movie, but add to it, the searing Indian summer. It takes immense commitment to stand for hours, or walk long distances in the heat, and sometimes in the odd summer shower to cast your vote. The urban voter did not show up with as much enthusiasm as the rural and semi-urban voter. While voting began as early as 7 a.m., most booths saw a small crowd ready to do their part in the electoral process. Crowds slacked around noon, again picked up speed towards the evening. At places where EVMs encountered snags, or there were power cuts, people stayed put.

Reports from Andhra Pradesh and Kerala showed the voting went on till almost midnight. The electors of Delhi cast their votes while enduring the summer heat on Saturday with some voters even fainting due to the blazing sun and hot winds sweeping the national capital even as poll authorities made arrangements to beat the heat. The capital was under an "orange alert" on the polling day with the maximum temperature being recorded at 43.4 degrees Celsius, 3.2 notches above the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department. A 70-year-old woman fainted at a polling booth in the West Delhi constituency after casting her vote. She was assisted by the volunteers and taken to the hospital.

The Election Commission of India had sent out a heat advisory to all State electoral officers a month before the polls started on April 19. The advisory followed the India Meteorological Centre's forecast of above normal temperatures during the summer, predicting stronger and longer spells of heatwaves, especially during March to June. Drinking water and oral rehydration salts were made available in polling booths. Shaded areas were set up at each polling station and the waiting areas fully covered.

Street vendors saw brisk business on the polling days, offering sugarcane juice, coconut water and buttermilk to thirsty customers who wanted to cool off after they had exercised their franchise.

The final phase of election will be held on June 1 and vote counting on June 4.

Keeping their cool: Water is distributed to polling staff while arrangements for the first phase of the election are made at Bikaner in Rajasthan on April 18. REUTERS

Classifieds

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LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

Matrimonial

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BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BUSINESS

Beautiful, Engineer Girl, Masters from London, India Settled
1988 Born, 5'4" Slim, fair Girl from affluent High Profile Konkonastha Brahmin Family, Short term issueless Divorcee, Seeks Compatible well educated Groom from well- settled business Family
Caste no Bar
SUDHIR BHATT
9920099889 / 9619101019 / 20
sudhirmatrim@gmail.com

COSMOPOLITAN

MALAYALI NAIR girl, 29, 161cms, lawyer working at Delhi. Father retired Army Col and mother Educationist at Bangalore. Looking for suitable match preferably from Delhi. Family from central Keralacontact 9880490458

NAIR GIRL Aug 1974 US citizen unit manager Chicago caste/lang no bar seeks groom from US residents only. cont 9895824803

DOCTOR

CHRISTIAN, CAST No Bar 28y, MBBS, MD, Father, Mother Well Educated. Seeks Doctor or Suitable Groom, Any Dist :7824023030

HINDU REDDY 33 Y, 165cms Doctor MBBS, MS. Suitable Never Married Groom From Chennai CNB Call: 89256 40111

VELLALAR (CNB) Fair 30 MBBS seeks Doctor Groom. 8056325579

DKV 27 M.B.B.S Aswine Mesham Father Mother Doctor. Seeks Doctor Groom Only. Ph : 94431 51045.

VANIYA CHETTIAR, Poorattahi 28/165, Fair, MBBS, Govt. Doctor, Pondicherry, seeks Doctor Groom, All Chettiar ok. Contact: 9442066913

JANGAM GIRL 24 5ft 4inch MBBS, Doctor Lives in Chennai. Looking for suitable Match. Cast No Bar. Contact: 9677199925.

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
MD Anesthesiology Doctor, Age: 34, 165cm fair, beautiful, cultured & homely. Settled in Chennai. Father Doctor Kerala Nair, Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor or Engineer groom preferred.
98400 50381 / 98409 85383

Intercaste Doctor Parents seeks alliance for their only daughter MBBS, MD, very fair, good looking, affluent age 39yrs/162cm, Divorcee, Associate Professor, Private Medical College. Caste No Bar, only doctor groom preferred. Contact : 9443167551

SC/AD, Hindu Girl 28yrs, Doctor, M.S. Opthomology, Chennai Working Seeks Doctor Groom only. Ct: 94449 35460.

✔ **CSI Christian** nadar girl, 29/152/ MS Doctor working in CMC Vellore, seeks alliance from PG Doctors. Cont: 9790794189.

HINDI

WANTED SUITABLE match for a girl, (SC), DOB: 22.03.1990, 4am /5'3"/ Doctor:MD (Pediatrics). Currently working as Asst.Prof. Family base Himachal Pradesh, presently residingatJaipur,Raj. MOB: 7014628144

MALAYALAM

EZHAVA GIRL MBBS MD,doing fellowship DOB 8/7/1993,3.30pm seeks alliance from well educated ezhava professionals 9447191776 Ernakulam.

HINDU EZHAVA Girl Gynecologist Working at Kannur Medical College 22.7.95 Uthiradam Upper Middle Class Seeks Same Profession Groom 8014205710

MUSLIM GIRL (33,159cm), M.Tech, Sr. Data Engineer (Techno Park, Tvm), D/o retd Govt officials with liberal values. Divorcee, no liabilities. 9656163623, 9446451249.

THE HINDU
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KANNADA

Tall, Elegant, Singapore Qualified, India Settled
1999 Born, 5'6" Kannadiga Bangalore based Girl from an affluent Biz. Family Looking for an equal match.
Caste no Bar
SUDHIR BHATT
9920099889 / 9619101019 / 20
sudhirmatrim@gmail.com

ENGINEER

Hindu Maruthuvar born May 95 Software Engineer seeks suitable Groom inland/abroad. Contact 9025690557.

NRI

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR 33/165, seeks God fearing groom, from good Christian family, preferably professional working in UK. Contact: 9442990948

PUNJABI

PhD frm IIT Dr Arora girl, 89/5' wkg scientist. Seeks wkg hi edu profile, well stld Delhi / Banglore. 9811425233, dr6arora@gmail.com

TAMIL

ELITE TAMIL Muslim B.E., 23, Seeks qualified, Suitable Groom Contact : 90807 90001

CSI NADAR, 24/168cm, BE, Elite Family. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 9380791999

CSI NADAR 25,MBA,VIP, Need:IAS,IPS, IFS, Group1, MBBS,business group, ME,MArch,RC Hindu Nadar Ok 9445286222

MUSLIM SLIM girl BE(CSC), 37 seeks qualified, employed, Never married Tamil Muslim Groom. 9444235779

PARENTS OF God Fearing CSI Nadar girl fair, beautiful, very rich P.G in management, working in a MNC in India. Seek a God Fearing well educated groom from a rich family age 30 to 36 Parents Contract : 9840999703

TAMIL CHRISTIAN BE 35/164Cm Handsome BC Girl Working CTS (SWE) in USA H1B Visa Seeks Goodlooking Groom Working with SWE/Professioal in USA. CNB. Brokers Excuse. CT:8148825673

CHRISTIAN RC, 35yrs, MS Engg, Working Engineer in USA, Income 1 Crore RIch/ Affluent family, Looking for Suitable Groom. Contact: 8138900305

CHRISTIAN, BORN Again 31yrs, PhD, Working govt Researcher in UAE, Income- 20 Lakhs, Well settled family, Looking for suitable Groom.Contact: 8138900498.

HINDU NADAR Widow 43, IT Job Own House (grownup Son), Chennai. Seeks alliance Caste No Bar Ct: 9600103393

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR 32/165 Mirugasim Raghu in Lagnam PG(HR MNC) Seeks IIM/PG, Pillai Groom Also. 9176780777

VANIYA CHETTIAR, M.Sc, 43/157, Karthigai, Govt.Scntf. Officer seeks equally Qualified Employed Groom. Contact: 94452 07116

RICH MUDALIYAR 28yrs MBBS MD Elite business family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom 9710093999/ 9710091999

MUKULATHOR Kallar 30Yrs/161cm Psychatrist, Natchathiram - Pooram, Rasi -Simman, seeks suitable Groom. Caste no bar. CT:99949-16611.

MAY 94/167 fair SC/PL BE , TCS Chennai, Parents Hindu/CSI. Seeks Groom Dr/Er, Govt Employee. 8056143638

ADIDRAVIDAR, AGE 27 BE, Govt 65, 000/– Fair, Well settled. Wants Suitable Groom. 08122289871 / 9444139323.

NAIDU, 33/170, Fair girl, MBBS prep PG, Seeks Doctor/Business groom Rich Family. BC/MBC. Ph: 99442 53292.

HINDU NADAR sisters, August 1994 / 167 cms / 63 kg, ME, Thiruvathirai, Mithunam. December 1998 / 166 cms / 60 kg, BE, MNC job Chennai, Poosam, Kadagam. Seeks suitable grooms. Ct: 96265 15511

SBI MANAGER, BE MBA,SC AD Hindu, 35yrs, Mesham–Bharani, seeking suitable & qualified Groom. Ph– 8056104103

TAMIL

BRIDEGROOM WANTED For 27 Tamil / MS (CSE) , USA Software Engr , Seattle , WA.Similar profile wanted. Parents Inter Hindu & RCC. Email : goodrich3210@gmail.com

F–PILLAI, M–SENGUNTHAR, 28/153cms, Doctor MBBS Preparing for PG, Revathi, Meenam Seeks Suitable Groom BC/ OC/ FC/ MBC only. Ct: 9566230325

DEVENDRAKULA VELLALAR Thiruvathirai (4) 26/162 BE CIVIL Jr. Engr. Wrkg Southern Railways, Seeks Suitable Boy. 94436 86234.

RICH MUDALIYAR, 23yrs, MBA, Own constructions, Ware Houses & Landlord. Elite business in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom 9710093999/ 9710091999

MUDALIAR POOSAM 25/168 USA Citizen, B.Sc. Working IT, seeks Qlfd. Groom. Whatsapp: +91 7826029997

VANNIYA KULA KSHATRIYA Bride, 22 Years Old, M.Com, Seeks Groom from same caste upper middle class. mail id: mangalam.leelavathy@gmail.com

PILLAI / SOZHIYA Vellalar 29/ 162cm,B.Tech (NIT) (UPSC ASPIRANT) (GROUP–II Services TN on the anvil) Working as IT Presales, Seeks suitable Bridegroom, Ct:9443543456 /9442712849

48/163 MUDALIAR/PILLAI M.com MBA Seeks professionally Qualifd Unmarried Below 50 Clean habits CNB 9444837355/9500113136/ anbumatri@gmail.com

HINDU SC AD, Poorattathi/ Meenam, Age 35, M.C.A Working in a MNC company, seeking Educated Groom from a good family background, below 38 Years from any Tamil Speaking Community. Contact: 9840107770, 9952930893.

TIRUNELVELI HINDU NADAR Girl 26yrs, 5ft 6 inch M.Arch, working in US seeks a well-Qualified Groom Ct: 98401 00836

FAIR MUDALIAR 28/170cm BE MS seeks Well Settled Boy Decent Family Ct : 7904735344

GROOM WANTED: Viswakarma 34yrs, 5'3 wheatish Coimbatore based, B.Tech, Pvt 30K Monthly Maharam, Avittam, No Dosham. 98943-34457.

HINDU, VANNIYAR, 24, B.Pharm, Own Medical Shop, Seeks Doctor Groom Priority. Ph: 9444399715

VANIYAKULA KSHATRIYA / Kettai, Viruchigam / 28 / 5'3 / MS / (Ph.D) / Fair / Working in private sector at New York/ 120000 USD. Educated Bride's Parents seek well qualified US settled groom with a good family background. Hindu same caste, Mudaliyar,Pillai,Yadava, Mukkulathoor,Chettiar and other equivalent Preferably. Whatsapp: 99403 72423/ +9194447 20315

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYAR bride 36 years Tall, Fair, ME PhD Assistant Professor, only Daughter with strong family background seeks suitable Decent, Employed or Business Groom. Contact: 99443-14575.

SEEKING EMPLOYED bridegroom below 35y for Hindu SC fair, educated, homely & employed divorced 32y bride from Elite family. CNBar 9483542477

36 PILLAI B.Com MBA Anusham Divorcee issueless seeks suitable groom 9094020665

TIRUNELVELI SAIVA Pillai, 29 yrs, 159cm, Thiruvathirai, BE(SSN),MBA (IIMB) seeks groom from good family same caste, Pure Veg Ph:9447699888

MUDALIAR BE MBA Network Engineer GOTN 24 yrs 158 cm Swathi Thulam only daughter of Joint Director GOTN own house Chennai seeks Engineer/ Doctor groom from well–settled family 9444113605 drebhaskaran19@gmail.com

DOCTOR MD (Pathology), DCH, 39yrs, Hindu BC, Divorcee without child, placed in private medical college seeks well settled, compatible & affectionate Groom. CNB. Ct: 9176289180

HINDU NADAR 32, 160, B.Tech, Working in IT Star Revathy seeks IT Groom below 35.Ct: 9944410712/ 9514952555

Hindu Surya Vellalar-Ezhava 24/167 cms Thiruvonam fair CBSE/Nlu Lawyer (Hons) CT:7418861398. No Brokers.

MUDALIAR 26/170 Fair,Beautiful, MBBS, MS–Doing, 600000.PA,Well Settled Family, CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

CHETTIAR: 25/V.FAIR, B.Com, CA, Asst.Manager, MNC, Chennai, Well settled Family– Seeks Groom Eng / Doctor – 9962530015

MUDALIAR: 22/V.FAIR & Beautiful, Master degree, Father Business, Elite Family,Seeks Groom – Business / Abroad – 8925019776

TAMIL

MUDALIAR 26, BE, MBA, 162cm,Good looking wellsettled family seeks alliance CNB, Ct.8778514465/ 7200866346

HINDU KARUNEEGAR (Vellore Based), Pure Vegetarian,BE/MBA Good Looking High Society Girl seeks Same Caste with High Profile Groom. 9600181656

HINDU SC MBBS Doctor Age 28 Uthiram–I/Simmam seeks suitable well employed Groom within Chennai 9500182723

KONGU VELLALA Gounder, 25yrs, MBA, Elite Business family. Seeks Suitable Groom Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU NADAR 26/163cm B.Tech, MBA (IIM), Rs.150000 per month,Seeks Suitable Groom.KA Ramannadar 9380791999

SC MANJU, 26–11–1985,SBI BM,Hindu Nadar,Bharani, preferred kanyakumari district, age39–40, employed, Ct: 9787780654/ 7022786601/ 9043826601

GROOM SOUGHT for Girl 44 Highly Educated Well placed Slim Vegetarian well Employed IT Professional Upper Middle Class Unconsummated Divorcee from Affluent Family. Contact Phone / WhatsApp 9789056615

BRIDES WANTED

ADVOCATE

SIKH, 31/ 5ft 5inch/ LLB, LLM, PhD (Law), own Office and House in Delhi seeks Hindu/Punjabi/Sikh Beautiful, Well Educated Bride preferably Lawyer/Teacher/Professor. Contact 9810000140

COSMOPOLITAN

DM– DOCTOR (Dec 91, Tamil, 185 cm, v.fair & h'some, clean habits, Hastham) needs a virtuous, tall, quite fair, pleasant PG Doctor / highly qualified bride, age 27–30 years, from educated Kongu Vellala, Kamma, Pillai, Mudaliyar, Nair, Gowda, Kapu or similar backgrounds. Prefers to settle in Coimbatore, Chennai, Bangalore, Kochi. Parents: 9342529547 / 9072118800.

LOOKING FOR bride Bangalore based 32Yrs, Education graduate Working in Central Govt. SC community. Any caste bride, looking beautiful well settled,family Graduate Ctc: 9113511457

HINDU 45, BBA handsome well settled–Coimbatore 1st marriage, divorcee/widow, CNB seeks bride. 8903712843.

ENGLISH

South Indian Brahmin, Mar1988, 5'11" MSc Engg (UK), never married, working in Vancouver, Canada, seeks professionally qualified bride, willing to relocate. Contact WhatsApp 9967531921.

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Bangalore. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

6 FEET 1 inch, 30 yrs, B.Tech (IIT Kanpur), Group A (Class I) Gazetted Officer in Central Govt, Mumbai. Caste/Language no Bar. Contact: +91 9004898881

MALAYALAM

RC KERALITE Bachelor 37 Chennai, Banker looking for a suitable match. Contact no. 8697421740

VISHWAKARMA (CARPENTER– Malayalam) , 34/ 5ft 1inch, Punartham, Private Company Job in Coimbatore, needs suitable bride from same community Contact 9442267579

TAMIL

WANTED PILLAI / Mudaliar bride age 34 to 37 for groom age 42. BE Computer Systems, UK. Never married before. Affluent. Managing family business. Ct: 95000 85565

AGE 46, 2nd Marriage, Working in Hospital at Qatar. Suitable Bride who willing to come Qatar. Ct: +97433840227 / 9498328263

PILLAI/SOZHIYA Vellalar, 29Yrs, 155cm, B.Tech, MBA, Working as Senior HR Executive in a reputed Company. Father College Prof (Rtd), Mother Agri Officer, Only son. Seeks suitable Bride. Subsect no bar. Cont: 94426-29455, 94889-60455.

HINDU KALLAR, 33yrs, PG Er. (Civil) seeks Engineering Bride from Southern District. Same caste only. Ct: 9123581088

Vanniyakulashatriyar 26/170cm, MS Canada. Thulam / Visaham / Ragu &Kethu 2nd Place,Employed in Bank@ Toronto seeks Educationally Qualified Bride from Decent Family. 9840087405

OFFICER 50, Govt Dept Separated Looking for Independent, Broad Minded, Well Settled Woman, 45 + With or Without Issues as a Companion Genuine Person. Contact : 9585245551

SC AD 28/B.Tech.,MBA.,Asst. Manager (Wipro)1,30,000/– pm Seeks Bride. Ph:9444993417 / Whatsapp:7397674481

HINDU NADAR 32/173cm, BE, 300000 per month, well settled. Seeks Suitable Bride. KA Raman Nadar 9380791999

YADAVA, 41 First Marriage,Pvt Ltd Chennai, National Head 18Lac PA Seeks Bride CNB/Divorcee ok :8610014920

VANNIYAR 37/168 BE, 1.45L, Visagam4th, Working in TATA Group of Company seeks Suitable Bride same CasteCt:9944330445/mpragathees@gmail.com

CHETTIAR, 30YRS, MBA London, Landlord, Madurai seeks good looking Bride. Caste No Bar. Ct: 94437 26677, Email Id: chiyanrajaram2@gmail.com

HINDU NADAR, 30yrs / 180cm, BE MBA, 33 LPA in MNC, Chennai, Well Educated Affluent Family, Seeking Well Educated Bride From a Similar Family Background. 9841054900

MUDALIAR 54 Divorcee Ph.D Engg abroad return Shares trade 5Cr properties sk suitable bride 40–45 no issues CNB 9500367269 sbkkeck@yahoo.com

BRIDE WANTED Elite Mudaliyar 25yrs MBA Own Constructions & Finance, Business family 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU DEVENDIRA kula vellalar M.E., 29/168 Asst. Engg. in PWD seeks suitable bride 8667380725, 8825793743

MUDALIYAR 26/165CM, BE, M.Tech, 1 Lakh per month, Elite Family, Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact: 8939691888

BE Bits Pilani 6'1 Mudaliar 32yrs Sr Product Mgr Corporate Bengalore 43 Lac PA, Bride 5 '4 Same or Allied Castes Tamil,Telugu. Ct: 7382620365

SENGUNTHA MUDALIYAR 36/167/BE 1Lak TCS, Thiruvatherai/Mithunam Sevai, Seek Bride from Mudaliyar. 9940241415

RICH MUDALIYAR, 31yrs, ME, MBA, Well Educated Family. Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9962791888/ 7094991999

B.E 29/180 cm, software, 32 L/ PA, parents intercaste Pillai/ Brahmin. Seeking educated, Hindu, good looking, employed girl, CNB. Contact: 9487783881

SOUTH INDIAN Vegetarian MBBS Doctor serving in IAF, Oct 1997 born 169 cms Mougalya Gothram, Rohini Star, Rishaba Rasi seeks Vegetarian Doctor Girl. 9442063443, 9003942248

HINDU Adi Dravida 25/176 Fair BA., L.L.B Advocate in Chennai seeks bride Email: betterhalfbride@gmail.com

PILLAI 38/186 B E (EEE) @ COGNIZANT Chennai as IT professional, Seeks suitable Bride Veg Only. 9042755506

TAMIL

HINDU IYER Boy age 35, US citizen, senior data scientist in New York city. Seeks an Educated Hindu Girl born or raised in the US. mail : gvaidyanathan@comcast.net Chennai Ct: Prabha Rao +914428132491

HINDU SC AD 32 Yrs 161cm B.Tech, IT Company,Fair, Own House, Well Settled, Caste No Bar, Seeks Qualified& Good Natured Bride. Ct: 8680095094

PILLAI(KARUNEEGAR), DOB:24–01–92, BE, Veg, Job: MNC (Software) Chennai, Annual Income: 25 lakhs. Seeking a suitable bride from the same or any other community. Ph: 9841784047 Email: pingme.arul@gmail.com.

WANTED A bride from good family Background,for Engineer6ft/30yrs, Hindu(viruchagam/Anusham) Caste no bar. Mob: +91 7305891154

ELITE MUDALIAR parents (senior level Govt. Officers) seek alliance from educated and affluent family for their only son, Doctor, 30, 175 cm having his own clinic at Chennai, Send details Directly To Parents Mail: msmm592@rediffmail.com

HINDU, 32yrs/170cm BE., Ayillam-Katagam/ SC/ Affluent Family, well Educated and settled in Bangalore. Seeking suitable Bride from same/ other caste. Contact No: 98454 01461

CASTE/AGE NO Bar Yadav(BC) BE,MBA UnMarried earns 40 LPA, Age 39. Against Dowry, no bad habits 8825918646

BRIDE WANTED Rich Mudaliyar 32yrs MS(UK) Own Industries in Chennai (Industrialist) 9710093999/ 9710091999

MUDALIAR 28/180, Handsome, MBBS, MD, Chennai, 4000000.PA, Elite Doctors Family,CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

DKV 43 DGM - Central Govt. Divorce - Child with Mother. Seeks Unemployed Girl. Caste No Bar. 94426 07143, 99945 67839.

NADAR, 29 yrs, BE, Working Engineer in UAE, income 15 Lakhs Well settled Family, Seeking for suitable . Contact: 8138900412

HINDU NADAR, 27/170, BE, MBA (BITS Pilani), Rs.3,00000/– per month, Seeks Suitable Bride. Ct: 9380791999

BRAHMIN, N BALAJI 38, MBA, HR Manager, 1 Lac PM, Electrosteel pvt Ltd, Kalahasthi, Seeking alliance employed or not working, and have privilege of bringing her dependent Parents. Contact: balajimnm2011@gmail.com, Ph: 9962148742, 8056256105

IYER MAGAM 40 B.Com 360000 PA Seeks any Veg. Girl Contact : 80127 58006

IYER, 43 yrs, CA, CMS, ICWA, working Finance Manager in Canada, income -1 crore Canada Dollar, Family rich / affluent status. Seeking for suitable Bride. Contact : 8138900312

Hindu Vysya Chettiyar 58yrs Self Employed Rs.6 L.P.A, Pure Veg. Seeks Bride. Caste No Bar. Ct: 94990 14886.

Nellai Saiva Pillai 29/175/1994/ 18LF MNBank in Chennai, seeks beautiful IT Girl same / sub caste Contact: 9445868954.

TAMIL

KONGU VELALA GOUNDER
28/180 Hand some, clean habits, B.sc viscom 2L/month
Working in reputed Co. Affulent Family with Good Net Worth. Seeking well educated BRIDE with similar background below 26 years,
Contact:
90942 02942 / 93821 90013

TELUGU

NAIDU 32 B.Tech IT PGDM HR Chennai Seeks Naidu(Any) Bride Well educated & employed Cell: 9444753417

AGE 37 Handsome, Well Settled Groom seeks VIP Family Bride & 1st Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce 9597834451

BALIJA 29/180 BE/ M.S (Ger) working in Germany 51Lpa. Seeks Suitable Bride.Ct: 9442623203 / 9442838203

NAIDU, KANNI/ Hastham 07.01.1991/B.Tech, IT,Software Engr. seeks Educated Girl Ct: 9361783287/ 9150851950

TELUGU IYER Age 32 Thiruvonam-4 Maths Teacher 5 Lac P.A Working in Coimbatore seeks Qualified Girl Caste no Bar, Prefer Veg. CT: 9943443509.

NRI Telugu Hindu Australian Rajaka 34 yrs, seeking any south Indian Girl, preferably Keralite or Tamilian CNB. Ph / Wp:+61 498081108

URDU

27 YRS / Ht.5.10, Affluent, Well Settled Business Family & Landlords Seeks Well Settled, Affluent, Well to do Family, Bride for their Son. Mail: syedabs@yahoo.in Ct.7845512232

BRIDE WANTED
Urdu Muslim, Affluent, Well settled hotelier family in Chennai
Seeks affluent, well-to-do, self employed / entrepreneur bride for their son
35 years / 180 cm
CONTACT
hotelmars@yahoo.com
9884079899

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ELITE BRIDES WANTED

PILLAI, 32, 162 cms, Doctor, MBBS & DNB. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Doctor. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded and well educated Doctor match. Contact: 6366448343

DEVAR, 34, 171 cms, Sr. Resident Doctor, M.Ch in Neurosurgery. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Neurosurgeon. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable PG Doctor match. Contact: 6366448343

DEVAR, 28, 183 cms, MS, Entrepreneur. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from same community. Contact: 6366448344

KAMMA, 29, 183 cms, MS, Businessman. Lives in Coimbatore. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable match from same community. Contact: 6366448344

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

MUDALIYAR, 26, 167 cms, MBA, Management Professional. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an affable match. Contact: 6366448344

EZHAVA, 24, 153 cms, BE, Entrepreneur. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from same community. Contact: 6366448344

NAIDU, 28, 165 cms, Sr. Resident Doctor, MD(Radiology). Lives in Trichy. Father is a Government retired officer. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded Doctor or Businessman match. Contact: 6366448343

VISHWAKARMA, 27, 171 cms, Doctor, MD in Radiology. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Managing Director. Family is financially well off. Looking for a Doctor match. Contact: 6366448343

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TAMIL

WANTED TALL Well Educated Iyengar/ Iyer Groom Chennai Based for a Tall Slim Good Looking Girl 31years, Ht 5.8" from affluent family. Contact : 9940414685, 9840043621

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GROOM PREFERENCE
Age : (30 -32)
Height : 5.10ft & above
from an leading Brahmin family
megawedding2021@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR A GROOM
Tamil Hindu Kallar affluent girl - Architect, 1996 born, working in Bangalore seeks a boy from similar Profession or Business settled in a Cosmopolitan city. Caste no bar.
CONTACT
94432 68128

PILLAI / MUDALIAR, 34, MD, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 34-36 yrs, Engineer/ Business/ Doctor. Contact: 9345855735

Tamil Muslim, Fair, Gd Looking, 26/ 160, B.N.Y.S, doing M.D, Seeks Doctor Engineer Professionals Preferably from Tirunelveli & Chennai. Contact: 7867044233, talk2nilar@gmail.com

HINDU, 37/5.2', Pooratadhi, Kumbam, M.A, M.Phil., Govt.Job, First marriage seeks suitable well employed Groom within TamilNadu. CNB. 8838352394

HINDU NADAR, 29yrs/160cm Moolam Dhanush, B.Tech (CS) working CISCO Bangalore Rs.19Lacs PA seeks Groom with similar Educational & Professional Background Contact: 91768 00819

DIVORCEE

ADIDRAVIDAR DIVORCE –Seeking Childless Widow/Divorcee/Spinster, simple educated bride, aged between 35 to 40 years for a legally divorced, well educated (B.E) ,45 yrs groom working as Project Manager in MNC. Religion no bar. Contact : 8122589004

Hindu Yadav May 1983 Divorced Handsome well settled IT groom seeks Bride. Caste No Bar. 9790406162 / 9994769399

DOCTOR

DOCTOR, PG, 34 years, 165cm, Catholic, legally divorced, settled in Kollam Dst, Kerala, Asst Prof in a private medical college. Seeks alliance from educated and employed Christian brides. Mob: 8281987470

30, SURGEON, seeks doctor bride (MBBS, MD/ MS, DM/ MCh), Kannada/ Tamil, OBC/ BC, Ph: 8618607705

HINDU NADAR, 28/165cm, MBBS, MD, 1 Lakh per month, Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9380791999

BRIDE WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 30yrs, MBBS, MS, Elite business family in Chennai.Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

ENGINEER

HINDU, NAIDU, ME(IT),27Yrs, Employed Canada, seeks engineer bride, India or Canada, WhatsApp 9840757993, e.mail: srmtrajan@gmail.com

MALAYALAM

NAIR BOY, 32/ 180, Pooram Suddha Jathakam, MBA engaged as Deputy Manager in Family Business in Chennai Invited Proposals Nair Girls with Suddha Jathakam Contact : 98414 28004 / 94446 25522.

NRI

NAIDU 29/180CM, Pooratathi, BTech MS, Working as Research Engr, PR of Sweden Contact Father 9566682220

TAMIL

TAMIL MUSLIM –May 1994/5'9" Handsome MS (USA) Senior SW Engr.USA. Seeks Bride (Tamil) Fair, Tall (5'4"– 5'9") Age (24–27yrs)– Engr. background– working/ Studying in USA or willing to move to USA. Ct: 9444149649 (Whatsapp) with Profile & Photos.

RC CHRISTIAN, 41yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, working for mnc, Chennai. CT– 9500188067

CSI CHRISTIAN Arunthathiyar,29, MD(anaesthesia) 5'10", seeks Christian Doctor Bride. 9442823837

✔ **BE MS** (CS) 28/180 Smart Goodlooking, A Product Architect-IT/ Successful Entrepreneur & Founder of leading FinTech based in Chennai earning 70 lacs+/yr from an educated Hindu Thevar family, seeks a bride age below 27yrs with similar values from a good family background. 78458 21205

TELUGU

BALIJA NAIDU, 28/152cm, Fair, PG, MNC Chennai Ct: 6380984534/saanvigklr@gmail.com

RICH NAIDU 27yrs, B.Tech, Elite Business Family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9710093999/ 9710091999

NAIDU GAVARA 24/157cms, Kettai, Viruchigam, Architect, MNC, 6.50 LPA, affluent family. Parents seeks well settled, professionally qualified groom. Contact: 9445045753

TELUGU

BALIJA NAIDU, Thiruvathurai/ Midhunam/ 27/165/MS / Canda PR/ Well Settled seeks Well qualified & Well settled groom from Canada. Caste No bar, Ct– 9840224474

GROOM WANTED Rich Kamma Naidu 27yrs, B.Tech,Own Constructions, Resorts & Finance,Elite business family in Chennai Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

RICH KAMMA Naidu, 29yrs, B.Tech,Well Educated family. Seeks Suitable Groom. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

URDU

Urdu Muslim, Good looking, Fair, 22/166, M.com seeks Educated & settled Groom. Contact: 9442600462, showhath@gmail.com

AHLE HADEES parents seek religious, qualified groom for daughter 23, 158 cm, fair, BE(CSE) Mob:9944642150

SMU BRIDE 1990 Fair Slim M.Tech working in MNC. Seeks Groom Professional, Educated Family Ct: 9176006218

TELUGU

NAIDU, 33/ 5'10" Fair Handsome, MS (USA) Software Engr. Seeks Bride (Telugu) Fair, Slim, Tall, Beautiful, Well Educated, Well Settled, Ct– 9840224474

BRIDE WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 30yrs, MBBS, MS, Elite business family in Chennai.Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

BRIDE WANTED Elite Mudaliyar 25yrs MBA Own Constructions & Finance, Business family 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU DEVENDIRA kula vellalar M.E., 29/168 Asst. Engg. in PWD seeks suitable bride 8667380725, 8825793743

MUDALIYAR 26/165CM, BE, M.Tech, 1 Lakh per month, Elite Family, Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact: 8939691888

BE Bits Pilani 6'1 Mudaliar 32yrs Sr Product Mgr Corporate Bengalore 43 Lac PA, Bride 5 '4 Same or Allied Castes Tamil,Telugu. Ct: 7382620365

SENGUNTHA MUDALIYAR 36/167/BE 1Lak TCS, Thiruvatherai/Mithunam Sevai, Seek Bride from Mudaliyar. 9940241415

RICH MUDALIYAR, 31yrs, ME, MBA, Well Educated Family. Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9962791888/ 7094991999

B.E 29/180 cm, software, 32 L/ PA, parents intercaste Pillai/ Brahmin. Seeking educated, Hindu, good looking, employed girl, CNB. Contact: 9487783881

SOUTH INDIAN Vegetarian MBBS Doctor serving in IAF, Oct 1997 born 169 cms Mougalya Gothram, Rohini Star, Rishaba Rasi seeks Vegetarian Doctor Girl. 9442063443, 9003942248

HINDU Adi Dravida 25/176 Fair BA., L.L.B Advocate in Chennai seeks bride Email: betterhalfbride@gmail.com

PILLAI 38/186 B E (EEE) @ COGNIZANT Chennai as IT professional, Seeks suitable Bride Veg Only. 9042755506

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87544 64038

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

TAMIL

HINDU GIRL, BE, 32, 5.3.– Working Boy, B.Sc, MBA, 36, 5.5. Both I or II Marriage ok. Ct: 9444132753

MARRIAGE BUREAU

US UK Australia All Caste Religion 1st Marriage Remarriage. 8248757840

City autos using multiple registration numbers raise safety concerns

Officials from the Transport Department say they are aware of such autos operating in the city

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

A senior Transport Department official stated that the use of multiple vehicle registration numbers is illegal. FILE PHOTO

When hiring an autorickshaw through an aggregator app in Bengaluru, you might come across an auto with two number plates: a standard yellow number plate and a white laminated printout hanging in front. This indicates that the auto driver is using multiple vehicle registration numbers to access various aggregator apps.

In the city many passengers have been complaining that they are seeing autorickshaw drivers displaying multiple registration number plates on their vehicles. This practice raises concerns among passengers about safety and legality.

"I booked an auto to head home recently after 7 p.m. from my office in Halasuru, and when it arrived, I noticed the registration number didn't match what was shown in the app. But I saw the correct number displayed on both the front and back of the auto. After confirming the one-time password(OTP), I reached my destination," said Chaya Singh, a resident of K.R. Puram.

"Although I reached safely, it was concerning that the auto had two registration numbers. It might not always be a safe situation, as auto drivers could misuse this and pose safety risks to commuters," she added. Yash Kumar K., a frequent user of aggregator apps from Rajajinagar, said that he was puzzled to see an auto with two number plates.

"When I asked the driver, he explained that he hadn't updated his registration details after getting a new auto. This practice is concerning," he said.

Meanwhile, officials from the Transport Department said that they are aware of such autos operating in the city.

A senior official stated that it is illegal for autos to use multiple vehicle registration numbers. "According to the law, a vehicle must have a single registration number displayed at both the front and back. Only the vehicle registered with the ride-hailing app should be used, and auto drivers should not use multiple registration numbers to take passengers through aggregator apps," the official said.

Officials further said that they would investigate the issue and take appropriate action soon.

However, when *The Hindu* contacted multiple ride-hailing apps for comment, none responded by the time this article was published.

However some of these apps have been sending messages or notifications to passengers, advising them to verify the registration number before boarding the auto. If the registration number does not match the one provided by the app, passengers are instructed not to board and to report the discrepancy within the app.

(We will update the article with responses from the ride-hailing apps once we receive them.)

Suspension of UPI system in post offices across city inconveniences customers

India Post officials say that they are in the process of moving from static QR codes to dynamic QR codes, which is why the system is currently not working. FILE PHOTO

Abhilekh Baruah
Debasmita Chowdhury
BENGALURU

It has been a little over two months since the UPI systems at all the post offices in Bengaluru stopped working. With no announcements from India Post, those who visit the post offices have been scrambling to find cash to pay for their transactions. It has not been working at the General Post Office, either, which normally sees a lot of customers.

"It is very inconvenient because cash payment is an outdated policy, and with UPI, the exact amount can be paid in a hassle-free manner", said Chayank, an advocate who was at the GPO. He said the officials at GPO often fail to provide change and instead request customers to carry the exact amount.

Shekhar Singh, a customer at the Whitefield post office, said, "Now when I go to the post office, I have to carry the exact amount with me while also keeping some change, just in case what I brought was not enough."

Sham A.N. said India Post should have made more efforts to let people know that the payment system was not working. "While digital payment systems work in most government offices now, at this post office, neither is the system working nor have they mentioned anywhere that they only accept cash payments. They need to put up posters or use their digital platforms to let people know that digital payment is not working," he said.

Dynamic QR code

India Post officials said the department was in the process of moving from static QR codes (where the payer has to enter the amount) to dynamic QR codes (where the amount will automatically appear upon scanning), which is why the system is currently not working. The decision to move was taken after several complaints of static QR codes not working properly.

"The dynamic QR codes, which are integrated with State Bank of India , have been implemented in about 1.4 lakh branch post offices in rural areas through the Android mobile platform", said S. Rajendra Kumar, Chief Post Master General , Karnataka Circle. However, this is yet to be implemented in other post offices in urban areas. "Within a few months, by around September, we will be migrating to a new IT solution, and then the dynamic QR codes will be available in all the post offices", he added.

Poor response to rule on panic button and tracking device

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

A technician installing a vehicle tracking device in a cab. FILE PHOTO

All public transport vehicles and those operating under a national permit in the State are required to install a vehicle location tracking device and an emergency panic button by November 2024. However, just like the High Security Registration Plate (HSRP), this has also received a very poor response.

To correct this, the Transport Department plans to launch an awareness campaign regarding the tracking device and panic button once the election-related Model Code of Conduct is lifted.

The rule went into effect on December 1, 2023, and vehicle owners were given one year to implement it. The rule states that the Regional Transport Offices will withhold the renewal of fitness certificates for public service vehicles if owners do not install the required devices with panic buttons within the stipulated period.

With six months left, the response has been poor, and most of the vehicle owners have not complied with the norm yet, a senior Transport Department official said.

Government assistance

Private transport bodies say the government's insistence that the devices have to be bought from one of the 13 empanelled vendors imposes a financial burden on them, and they are asking for government assistance.

"The requirement to replace existing devices adds further financial strain," said K. Radhakrishna Holla, president of the Karnataka State Travel Operators' Association.

"Many cab operators have voluntarily installed GPS devices to prevent illegal activities and ensure passenger safety, even without government mandates. However, the cost is prohibitive for less affluent cab drivers. Therefore, I urge the government to provide financial support through the Nirbhaya scheme," Mr. Holla added.

Vehicle owners can purchase the devices from approved manufacturers at a cost of ₹7,599 (excluding GST) from among 13 empanelled vendors.

Cost of the kit

"The tracking device and panic button kit available in the market costs around ₹4,000 - ₹5,000, but the unit supplied by the Transport Department's empanelled vendors costs ₹7,599. The government should address this issue," said Ajith Kumar, a cab driver from Ramamurthy Nagar.

FIR against five for illegaly accessing CDR

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An FIR has been lodged against five individuals, including a retired Indian Police Service officer and a police inspector, for allegedly illegally accessing call detail records (CDRs) of an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official in Bengaluru. The complaint was filed by an IAS officer, prompting an investigation.

The accused individuals named in the FIR are the retired IPS officer Suresh T. R., Hebbagodi police station inspector Iyanna Reddy and three others.

State schools part of THiS achieve good results in class 10 exams

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The schools that are part of The Hindu in School (THiS) programme have achieved good results in the State Board class 10 examination. Most of the schools in the programme achieved 100% results this year.

28 distinctions

Amara Jyothi English Primary School, Devasandra, K.R. Puram, Bengaluru, achieved 100% results in Class 10 with 28 distinctions. Sohan S.G., who secured 97.28%, emerged as the school's topper.

In Mahila Seva Samaja High School, K.R. Road, 26 students got distinctions. Two students, Mithali Jain and Anagha G.R., secured 95.68% and bagged the school topper tag.

The Carmel High School, Basaveswaranagar, got 100% results with 11 distinctions and 24 first classes. S. Gireesh secured 96.86% marks and emerged as the school's topper. In the first batch of Siddaganga Public School, Vijayanagara, two students received distinctions, and five students first class. Mohammed Rihaan secured 95% of marks and is the school topper.

Fifty-four students secured distinctions this year in MES Kishora Kendra Primary and High School, Malleswaram. Yash Y. emerged as the school's topper with 97.92% marks.

Among 145 students who appeared in the examination, 144 passed, and 15 got distinction in Kairalee Nikethan Education Trust Indiranagar High School, Indiranagar. Hari Priya emerged as a school topper with 96.96% marks.

Out of 11 students who wrote the exam, two secured distinctions and six got first class in Pavan English School and P.U. College, Nagappa Block, Srirampura. In Prasiddhi School, Palace Ground, Vasanth Nagar, 13 students got distinction, and Ridhishree secured 621 out of 625 (99.36%).

The St. Claret School, Jalahalli, got 98.70% results this year with 74 distinctions and 135 first classes. Dheeraj Preetham Reddy B.C. secured 99.68% marks and emerged as the school topper.

The Auden School, Hosakerehalli, got 100% results this year with eight distinctions and Shreeraksha K.J., secured 92.64% marks and emerged as the school's topper.

Lewa English High School, West of Chord Road, registered 99% results. Thirty-eight students wrote the exam, 13 got distinction and 18 secured first class. Shashank B. with 97.4% was the topper.

Out of 102 students who appeared exam in Bapu High School, Yeshwantpur, 23 got distinction and 65 secured first class. The topper was Neeraj S. with 98.88% marks.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAY. 26	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:41
RISE 21:31	SET 08:01
MONDAY, MAY. 27	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:41
RISE 22:26	SET 09:02
TUESDAY, MAY. 28	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 23:18	SET 10:03

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	26
Mysuru	31	21
Bengaluru	31	22

Bengaluru Today
32°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be little warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower tmay occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm and humid. Night will comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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CENTRAL RAILWAY
VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Chief Administrative Officer (Const.), Central Railway, 6th floor, New Administrative Building, D.N.Road, CSMT, Mumbai-400001, for and on behalf of President of India invites Open tenders through e-tendering on **IREPS website (e-tender portal). www.ireps.gov.in (In Two Packet System)**, from reputed Contractors for the following work: **Name of Work:** Construction of Earth work, Major Bridges, Minor Bridges, Road Over Bridges, Road Under Bridges, Limited Height Subways/Pedestrian Crossing, Retaining Wall, Drains, Track Laying and Civil Works including Station Building, Service Buildings, Platforms, Residential Quarters, Station Machinery, Compound Wall and Fencing along the alignment from Solapur (Ch (-) 1086) to Tuljapur (Ch 52500) except Ch. 45760 to Ch.48660 (i.e. except Tunnel Portion) in connection with New Line section under Solapur Division of Central Railway (the "Project"). (TWO PACKET SYSTEM). [EPC Tender] **Tender Value:** Rs. 942,03,36,534.00 **Bid Security:** Rs. 2,00,00,000.00 **Cost of Tender Form:** Not Applicable (As per Clause No.3 at Page 4 of GCC APRIL 2022) **Validity of offer:** 180 days from the date of opening of Tender **Completion period:** 30 (Thirty) Months including monsoon **Availability of Tender documents:** Available on the website **www.ireps.gov.in Date & Time of Submission & Opening of Tenders: The e-tenders duly completed in all respects, along with the requisite documents, should be uploaded electronically on the abovementioned website, up to 15.00 hrs on 06.08.2024.** The tender **(Technical Bid only)** will be opened online on the same day after 15.00 hrs. Joint Venture Firm: Joint Venture (JV) firms will be allowed to participate in this tender. **Important Note to Tenderers: a) The tendering will be solely through e-tendering only.** All intending tenderers need to first register with IREPS website **www.ireps.gov.in. b)** Prospective tenderer/s are advised that before submitting their offer electronically, they should refer to the Tender details regarding terms and conditions, eligibility criteria, etc. **c)** Tender documents & corrigendum issued from time to time are available on the website mentioned above. Changes, if any, would be posted on this website at least 15 days in advance of opening of tender and may be seen on this website. For any additional information/clarification contact either on the above address or **Dy.Chief Engineer(C)/Solapur, Central Railway, DRM Office Compound Modi Khana, Railway Lines, Solapur-413001** on any working day between 10.00 hours to 17.30 hrs. **Note:- If there is any difference between the Hindi and English versions in any kind of words, terms and conditions etc. under the e-tender notice, then in that case the English version of the e-tender notice will be considered final and will be applicable. e-Tender (OPEN TENDER) Notice No. CAOC-10-2024 Dated 21.05.2024**

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- 1, B.S.N.L. BUILDING, 4THFLOOR, TELEPHONE HOUSE, RAJBHAVAN ROAD, BENGALURU- 560 001
O.A. No. 1370/2022
BETWEEN :
ICICI BANK LIMITED ...APPLICANT
AND :
SRI. K. PRASAD RAO & OTHERS ...DEFENDANTS
To,
1. SRI. K. PRASAD RAO, S/O. SRI K. RANGARAO, AGED ABOUT 54 YEARS, NO.19/248, SIRUGUPPA, BELLARY-583 121
2. SRI K.RANGA RAO, S/O. SRI.VENKAINARAYANA KOLLI, AGED ABOUT 54 YEARS, NO.19/248, SIRUGUPPA, BELLARY-583 121
3. SRI K. VIJAYAKUMARI, W/O. SRI. VENKAINARAYANA KOLLI, AGED ABOUT 75 YEARS, NO. 19/248, SIRUGUPPA, BELLARY- 583 121

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANTS UNDER RULE 23 (Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

WHEREAS: the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of **Rs. 43,82,627/- (Rupees Forty Three Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand Six Hundred and Twenty Seven Rupees only)** amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

The above mentioned defendants are required to appear therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly instructed in support of their defence to show cause on **20/06/2024** at **10:30 A.M.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day **04/05/2024.**

BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
REGISTRAR- 1
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- 1
BANGALORE

Extra precaution: Arrangements were made for large containers of water to be available in election materials distribution centres, such as this one in Barmer, Rajasthan, on April 25. REUTERS

Heat and dust: A helicopter carrying party leaders and candidates takes off after an election rally on May 10 in the Kannuaj constituency in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the fourth phase of polling. SANDEEP SAXENA

Post-poll ruminations: Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress activists sit under a tree at the end of the second phase of polling in Rajasthan on April 26. GETTY IMAGES

Fan moment: A man uses a hand fan, which is part of the quirky campaign material featuring a Congress candidate from the Ernakulam constituency in Kerala on April 21. THULASI KAKKAT

Thirst quencher: Supporters of the YSRCP rush to collect buttermilk packets from volunteers during a rally at Seethammadhara in Visakhapatnam on May 24. V. RAJU

Bitcoin scam: SIT arrests Robin Kandelwal, invokes KCOCA

He is said to be a close associate of hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, the key accused in the alleged scam; the duo has cases of hacking govt. websites and hacking and stealing bitcoins

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Sources in SIT said after Sriki stole the coins, Khandelwal converted them into money. FILE PHOTO

The Special Investigation Team of the Criminal Investigation Department, probing the alleged bitcoin scam, has arrested Robin Khandelwal in a case registered at New Extension police station in Tumakuru.

He is said to be a close associate of hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, the key accused in the alleged scam.

Sources in the SIT said the sleuths picked him up from a North Indian State. Sriki was arrested from a plush hotel in Ganganagar, Bengaluru, on May 7. He is now in judicial custody.

Meanwhile, the SIT has now booked accused Khandelwal and hacker Sriki under the draconian Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act 2000. The duo has cases of hacking government websites and hacking and stealing bitcoins in different police stations in Karnataka.

In 2017, based on a complaint filed by Harish B.V., Director of Unocoin Technologies Private Limited, a case was registered against unknown persons. The complaint alleged that some unknown persons hacked into the database of the company and stole 60.6 bitcoins. One coin was worth ₹1,67,481 when they were stolen.

The sources in the SIT said that after Sriki stole the coins, Khandelwal converted them into money. The accused, Khandelwal, was allegedly converting, laundering, and trading cryptocurrency for Sriki for a long time after they came into contact through an internet platform. Sources say that Khandelwal also transferred money to the accounts of Sriki's friends.

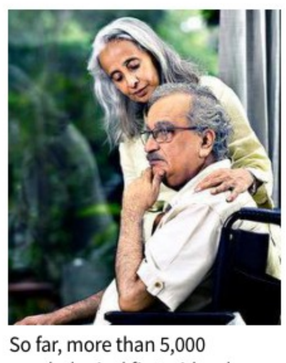
NIMHANS to hold workshop on immediate care for those facing mental health crisis

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Recently, a 17-year-old class 10 student was scammed while playing an online rummy game resulting in a loss of ₹5 lakh from his father's bank account. The devastated boy became extremely sad, anxious, and agitated. Filled by guilt and fear, he was unwilling to discuss the incident with his parents who were still unaware of what had happened.

Although his friend wanted to provide support to the boy during the mental health crisis, he was unsure about how to help.

To facilitate and equip people with the knowledge and skills to provide immediate care to those facing a mental health crisis, NIMHANS has now decided to step in. It will organise a workshop on "Immediate Care for Handling Mental Health Crisis" on June 1, aimed at equipping friends and family with the skills to listen, support, and reassure those in distress, said K.S. Meena, Professor and Head of the Department of Mental Health Education at NIMHANS. Pointing out that there are hardly any training programmes in India conducted for the public on identifying and managing the day-to-day crises that people face, the doctor said most psychological first-aid programs deal with managing severe mental disorders. In the wake of this, a unique initiative was adopted at NIMHANS from 2016. So far, more than 5,000 psychological first-aiders have been trained from all over the country, she said.


So far, more than 5,000 psychological first-aiders have been trained. GETTY IMAGES

This workshop is ideal for teachers, students, volunteers, caregivers, health workers

What is immediate care?

"Immediate care refers to prompt and effective support given to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. This type of care is critical in stabilising the situation, providing initial support, and preventing the crisis from worsening. It involves recognising early signs of mental distress, offering empathetic support, and guiding individuals toward professional help if necessary. While it is not a long-term solution, it can be used by anyone, not just mental health professionals, and is an effective method for addressing distress, fear, or uncertainty," she explained.

While people are often able to help those with severe mental health disorders by facilitating hospital visits or therapy, everyday mental health crises are frequently misunderstood and mishandled. "Unlike physical crises, such as bleeding or fractures, where immediate assistance is commonly known, the same level of public knowledge does not exist during mental health emergencies," Dr. Meena said.

This workshop is ideal for teachers, students, volunteers, caregivers, health workers, and anyone interested in providing initial support during mental health crises. Attendees have to pay a fee of ₹500.

The workshop will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Seminar Hall 1, Department of Mental Health Education, Dr. M.V. Govindaswamy Building at NIMHANS. People can register at https://forms.gle/Q8zzqhpwYpDsReNW7 by May 29. Details can be had on 080-26995156 or mheducation.nimhans@gmail.com

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While Prajwal Revanna hides abroad, sexual assault survivors in Hassan are exposed to all

Sathish G.T.
HASSAN

While Member of Parliament for Hassan Prajwal Revanna, accused of sexual abuse of several women, is still away in an unknown foreign location, many survivors of alleged rape and harassment are finding the going extremely tough back in his home district.

Taunted by their life partners, ill-treated by family members, and being projected in a humiliating manner on social media, most of the survivors have remained incommunicado.

"A few have vacated their houses in the city, along with family members. Some have restricted themselves to the four walls of their home, cutting off contact with the outside world," said a resident of Hassan, familiar with some of the survivors.

Soon after explicit videos went viral, people started identifying the survivors.

"Some were assaulted by their own family members even as they faced humiliation outside. In some cases, their life-partners and family members were worried that the survivors might take the extreme step. Hence, they are keeping a constant watch on them," said T.R. Vijay Kumar, leader of the Madiga Dandora Samiti, who knows some of the survivors.

Punishment sought

"Some media platforms have gone overboard, enthusiastically disclosing all the details that could help readers identify the survivors," said Roopa Hassan, writer and activist based in Hassan. Two survivors, who were initially willing to file complaints, changed their mind after going through media reports. "Revealing the identity of survivors in such cases is a crime (Section 228A of the Indian Penal Code). The police should take action. Otherwise, such wrong conduct will be accepted as normal," she opined.

A file photo of a protest by activists demanding the arrest of Prajwal Revanna, Hassan MP.

Dharmesh, Hassan district secretary of the CPI (M), said, "The more we speak about the survivors explicitly, the more damage we cause to them." The survivors have been undergoing a horrendous experience every day as the videos are still in circulation. "Many journalists approach me with requests to arrange interviews with survivors. I discourage them. Because, whoever talks to them, either a journalist or an activist, has watched the videos that have gone viral. One can imagine how difficult it is for the survivor to meet strangers who have watched the video clips. It is time to ask tough questions to perpetrators of the crime, not survivors," he added.

> Some media platforms have gone overboard, enthusiastically disclosing all the details that could help readers identify the survivors.
> **ROOPA HASSAN,** writer and activist based in Hassan

Another Hassan resident, who has interacted with one of the survivors, pointed out that while the prime accused is abroad, his father, H.D. Revanna, also an accused, went to jail, but came out on bail. Meanwhile the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, who is the uncle of the main accused, keeps talking to the media, questioning the way the Special Investigation Team has been conducting the probe. "The former Chief Minister and his party colleagues have alleged that the State government is provoking the survivors to file complaints, casting aspersions on the intent of the complaints. There has been hardly any development that instils confidence among the survivors to come out and file complaints. Hence, many survivors have refused to meet the police and complain," she said.

Offer of counselling

S.V. Santhosh, professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences, told *The Hindu* that the department and the institute would offer counselling to those in distress following the recent development. "Those who have been facing problems should approach us. Maintaining confidentiality is part of our duty, and our ethics. We are ready to help them, and they should come forward," he said.

CM: How is distribution of explicit videos a 'bigger crime' than rape?

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday sought to know under what provisions of the law could distribution of explicit videos be considered a "bigger crime" than rape.

He was reacting to a reporter in Mysuru who sought his response to the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's alleged contention that leaking of videos explicitly showing sexual abuse, allegedly involving his nephew and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, was a graver crime. Mr. Siddaramaiah sought to know the sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that make the crime of making explicit videos viral a "graver crime than rape itself".

He hastened to add that the act of showing the faces of the victims of the sexual assault and distributing the videos among the public was also an offence.

On Jaishankar's claim

Reacting to Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar's reported claim that there was a delay on the part the Government of Karnataka in sending the letter for cancellation of the diplomatic passport issued to Mr. Prajwal Revanna, Mr. Siddaramaiah said he had written the first letter more than 15 days ago.

Later, letters seeking cancellation of the diplomatic passport issued to Mr. Prajwal Revanna had also been sent by the Police Department and the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted to probe the sexual assault charges. Mr. Siddaramaiah had followed up by sending a second letter in this regard to the Centre. "For argument's sake, even if it is assumed that there was a delay in sending the letter, let the Centre cancel it now at least," he said.

DKS likely to continue as KPCC president till elections to local bodies

During the formation of the Congress government in May 2023, the party high command had decided that Shivakumar will continue in the party post until the Lok Sabha elections

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who has completed four years as president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), is expected to continue in the party post at least for one more year.

Known as the party's "troubleshooter", Mr. Shivakumar will lead the State Congress in the upcoming elections to zilla and taluk panchayats and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

During the process of the government formation in the State in May 2023, the party high command had decided that Mr. Shivakumar will continue as KPCC president until the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K Shivakumar holding a meeting with Ministers Satish Jarkiholi, B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, Krishna Byre Gowda, and Priyank Kharge, at his residence in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Elections long due

Now, after completing one year in office, the Congress government and the party are gearing up to hold elections to rural and urban local bodies after the declaration of parliamentary election results on June 4. Elections to the BBMP council and zilla and taluk panchayats have not been held since September 2020 and April-May 2021, respectively. The polls are yet to be announced.

The State government cited the delimitation of wards in the BBMP as well as in ZPs and TPs as a major reason for the delay in holding elections to the local bodies.

> **The party is gearing up to hold elections to BBMP council and zilla and taluk panchayats**

Good network

A party functionary told *The Hindu* that Mr. Shivakumar would continue to head the KPCC at least till the completion of elections to rural and urban local bodies. Moreover, Mr. Shivakumar, who gained the experience of leading the party in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, has developed a network in each Assembly constituency which would play a crucial role in panchayat elections, the leader said. Mr. Shivakumar's proximity to the central leadership and his micro-political management ability have made him the go-to man in several situations. His ability to marshal financial resources and community support too would come in handy during the elections to the local bodies, said another Congress leader.

Being in charge of the Bengaluru Development portfolio, the Vokkaliga leader appears to have gained a grip over the BBMP affairs, which would come useful during the elections to the civic body, which is the richest local body in the State.

Council poll candidates

Sources in the Congress said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar are likely to meet the party's central leaders in Delhi on Tuesday for the selection of candidates for elections to the Legislative Council. The elections to the 11 Legislative Council seats from the Assembly will be held on June 13 and the results will be announced the same day.

Sources said Mr. Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra, Minister N.S. Boseraju, MLC K. Govindaraj, and KPCC office-bearer Kamalakshi Rajanna are among the ticket aspirants from the party.

The strength of the Congress in the Assembly – 136 members – would ensure the party wins seven of the 11 seats, while the BJP and JD(S) would secure three and one seat, respectively.

PM's stay in Mysuru: Khandre says issue of pending bills will be resolved amicably

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar B. Khandre has said the issue of settling the outstanding bills of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stay at a hotel in Mysuru last year and the expenditure incurred for the Project Tiger golden jubilee event will be resolved amicably.

Responding to the report that appeared in *The Hindu* on May 25, 2024, on the non-settlement of bills, Mr. Khandre said the Prime Minister was in Mysuru in connection with the golden jubilee event of Project Tiger but the State government had no role in it. "As the Assembly elections had already been declared in Karnataka and the model code of conduct was in force, there was no involvement of the State government," said Mr. Khandre.

Eshwar Khandre

He pointed out that even the then Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai did not take part and nor was the State emblem used during the three-day programme. As it was entirely the programme of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, it is the Centre's obligation to clear the pending amount, including the expenses incurred for the stay of the Prime Minister, Mr. Khandre added.

Cost of the event

The cost of the event ran up to ₹6.33 crore and initially, the NTCA agreed to foot the bill but it has now cleared only ₹3 crore and the balance amount, including hotel bills of Mr. Modi's stay amounting to ₹80.6 lakh, was yet to be settled, said the Minister and expressed confidence that the issue would be resolved amicably.

A senior bureaucrat who spoke to *The Hindu* said the issue could have been handled better and described it as a purely technical or procedural matter that need to be resolved.

The turn of events also highlights the need for a modern facility with state-of-the-art amenities that also meets state guests' security requirements during their visit to Mysuru. A proposal for such a facility and an annexe to the existing Government House was made by then Deputy Commissioner D. Randeep in 2018 but it has remained on paper.

BJP expels Raghupathi Bhat for entering Legislative Council poll fray as a rebel

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The BJP on Saturday expelled its former Udupi MLA K. Raghupathi Bhat from the party for six years for contesting the Legislative Council elections from the Karnataka South-West Graduates' constituency as a rebel candidate.

The party has fielded Dhananjaya Sarji, a doctor from Shivamogga, as its candidate in the constituency.

In his order, BJP State Disciplinary Committee president Lingaraja Patil said Mr. Bhat has been expelled with immediate effect for violating the discipline of the party. Mr. Bhat has embarassed the party by contesting as a rebel candidate, he said.

K. Raghupathi Bhat

Mr. Bhat was BJP's in charge in Shivamogga constituency for this year's Lok Sabha election.

He won from Udupi in 2004, 2008, and 2018 elections. In the 2023 election, the BJP replaced Mr. Bhat with Yashpal Suvarna in Udupi. Mr. Bhat was also

> **He is contesting the elections from the Karnataka South-West Graduates' constituency**

president of the Udupi district unit of the party.

Mr. Bhat has accused the BJP of fielding a junior (Dr. Sarji) in the Legislative Council polls by sidelining seniors in the party. Dr. Sarji joined the party a year ago, he said.

Mr. Bhat is angry that the party replaced him in Udupi by not consulting him and by not giving him any hint. He claims that party State leaders had promised to field him from the South-West Graduates' constituency.

The former MLA said the party had also sidelined the coastal belt, which is its stronghold, while selecting candidates for the Council polls. No local candidate from the coastal belt has been fielded either in the graduates' or the South-West Teachers' constituency, he said.

Mr. Bhat went on record recently that he was aware that the BJP would suspend him.

KPTCL issues appointment order to fill 902 posts

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. (KPTCL) has issued appointment orders to fill 902 posts.

"In March 2024, before the implementation of the model code of conduct, 368 assistant engineer (Electrical), 17 assistant engineer (Civil), and 15 junior engineer (Civil) candidates were counselled, and their appointment orders were issued. Following a rigorous selection process, 502 out of 535 candidates were successfully appointed for the post of junior engineer through counselling on Wednesday and Thursday," said a press release from the KPTCL. The release also said that another 360 candidates for junior assistant posts are subject to a provisional selection list. The final shortlist of the candidates will be published by the government after reviewing the objections, which were accepted until Friday.

PGCET on July 13 and 14

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will conduct PGCET-24 for admissions to MBA, MCA, M.Tech, ME, and M.Arch courses on July 13 and 14.

The examination for admissions to ME/M.Tech/M.Arch courses will be held on July 13 and that for MCA and MBA courses on July 14, H. Prasanna, Executive Director of the KEA, said in a press release.

The applications for the examination may be submitted online from May 27 to June 17 and fees should be paid by June 18, according to the release. Candidates who are eligible for GATE need not attend PGCET. However, such candidates should submit the PGCET applications online to become eligible for admission. They will be allotted seats based on their GATE marks.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBRANCE

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(Founder Director General, NIC)
10.05.1940 - 26.05.2013

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DR. KASHINATH
on behalf of all
NICEAN'S #
9810282797

IN THE COURT OF THE IX ADDL. CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-05)
P & Sc. No. 612/2023

Petitioner : SMT. SANGEETHA, Daughter of Kuppamma, Wife of Devaraj, Aged about 35 years, Residing No. 26, 3rd Cross, Ashwath katte, Chikka Basavanapura, Virgonagar Post, Bengaluru North Taluk.

-V/s-

Respondents : NILL

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the above named has made petition to this court under Section 372 of Indian Succession Act for the grant of Succession Certificate in favour of the Petitioner. The mother of the petitioner Kuppamma expired 19/05/2023. Before the death Kuppamma has executed the WILL Dated: 17/03/2023. In favour of the Smt. Sangeetha.

This Notice is hereby given to all concerned who have any objection/s in respect of the above referred property by my client or if have any right, title, interest or claim/s over the same or any part thereof to lodge their written objections/claims together with supporting documentary proof to the undersigned parties are hereby called to appear in this court in person or by pleader duly instructed **on 26/06/2024 at 11 a.m.** inform to show cause against the petitioner failing wherein the appearance will be heard and decreed as Ex parte / considered.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcel of the old katha No. 119:122, New No. 128/119/119, ITI Notified Area, Measuring to an extent of East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 feet, within in the limits of BBMP, Situated at Basavanapura Village, K.R. Puram Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Presently Bengaluru East Taluk and bounded on:

East by : Property belongs to Ellamma, **West by :** Property belongs to Chinnathambi, **North by :** Property belongs to Jogi Munishamappa, **South by :** Road.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 18th day of March 2024.

By order of the Court, Senior Sheristedar, Deputy Registrar, City Civil Court, Bengaluru.

Advocate for Petitioner : **M.V. Venkatesh**
No. 53, 1st Floor, 28th Cross, Cubbonpet, Bangalore - 560 002. Mob: 9900805433

Three terror plots in State over 12 years linked to unidentified 'online handler'

Investigators believe that identifying the handler may hold the key to the multiple terror plots

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The agencies investigating The Rameshwaram Cafe blast case are now keen on unmasking the identity of an "online handler", suspected to be based abroad, who allegedly indoctrinated and coached the "Thirthahalli module" led by Abdul Matheen Taaha, who is allegedly behind the cafe blast.

Interestingly, the case has now been linked to two earlier terror conspiracy cases dating back to 2012 and 2020 in Karnataka, with common accused in these cases.

In all three cases, the modules had an unidentified "online handler" suspected to be based out of Pakistan.

The front view of The Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru where a blast occurred on March 1.
SUDHAKARA JAIN

Identification is key

Agencies believe that identifying the handler may hold the key to multiple terror plots in the State over the past 12 years. Agencies are not ruling out the possibility that the handler in all three cases could be the same person.

However, senior officials said that there was no confirmation on this, and the handlers could well be different people.

The National Investigation Agency on Friday arrested Shoaib Ahmed Mirza, 35, a resident of Hubballi and an ex-convict in a 2012 Lashkar-e-Taiba terror conspiracy case.

NIA claimed that Mirza, who served a sentence of five years in the 2012 case and came out of jail in 2017, introduced Taaha to "an online handler through an encrypted email" in 2018.

Taaha's name first emerged on the radar of security agencies in 2020 when they busted an Islamic State-inspired Al Hind terror module in Bengaluru. The module allegedly was in advanced preparations to set up camps in the jungles of south India to launch an IS-like insurgency.

A main accused

"Taaha was one of the main accused in the case, along with his associate Mussavir Hussain, who planted the bomb at The Rameshwaram Cafe. Both gave the slip to agencies and were absconding till they were arrested in April 2024 by the NIA. Our investigations revealed that Taaha was the link between the module and a Pakistan-based online handler, with whom the module used to chat on a laptop using encrypted communication tools. Given that NIA has now found out that Mirza introduced him to an online handler in 2018, chances are high that the same handler was coaching the Al Hind module through Taaha," said a senior police official who probed the Al Hind module case.

'Tirthahalli module'

Once the Al Hind module was busted, Taaha and Hussain went absconding, and they allegedly put together the "Tirthahalli module", radicalising youths of their hometown in south Karnataka.

In all three cases, the modules had an unidentified 'online handler' suspected to be based out of Pakistan

Pro-terror graffiti case

This module is the accused in four terror cases – a pro-terror graffiti case in 2020, a trial blast case in Shivamogga, the cooker blast case in Mangaluru in 2022, and the cafe blast in 2024.

With the arrest of Mirza in the case, NIA now claims that the same online handler Mirza introduced to Taaha in 2018 was the handler to the Tirthahalli module and in the cafe blast as well.

In the 2012 terror conspiracy case, in which 13 people, including Mirza, were convicted for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to kill journalists, police officials, and writers from the Hindu community, chargesheets mention that the module had a Pakistan-based online handler, whose identity they could not establish.

This essentially means the 2012 LeT terror conspiracy case, the 2020 Al Hind module case, and the 2024 The Rameshwaram Cafe blast case seem to be linked to one another through Shoaib Ahmed Mirza and Abdul Matheen Taaha at one end and an unidentified online handler, based abroad, at the other.

KKRTC bus driver stabbed by goods vehicle driver in a road rage

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a road-rage episode on Friday morning in Nelamangala, a Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) bus driver was stabbed by the driver of a goods vehicle.

According to police, the accused has been identified as Bhaskar Reddy, 32 from Madanayakanahalli. The assailant has been apprehended by the police.

Meanwhile, Shivappa Madiwala, 40, the injured bus driver, is currently being treated at a private hospital in Tumakuru.

According to the police, the altercation unfolded as the bus, en route from Koppal in Kalyana Karnataka, encountered Reddy's attempt to overtake the bus near Dobbspet, leading to a confrontation.

The Dobspet police have booked a case and Reddy is in judicial custody.

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South End Reclamation Area (SE&A),
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Query, if any, Please write to : bba24@imu.ac.in
HELPLINE: 044-2453 9027/28
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For detailed information, **please visit Institute website www.nitp.ac.in**
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ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಶಾಖಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯ, ಆಹಾರ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ವಿತರಣೆ, ಭಾರತ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
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भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो
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A platform to learn & discuss Indian standards.
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Vivekananda nagar. Bengaluru, karnataka- 560058.
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Kozhikode temple may have played host to Srirangam idols

A.S. Jayanth
KOZHIKODE

A less-known temple in Nellikode, near Kozhikode, in Kerala could shed light on the presence of a Vaishnavite settlement on the outskirts of Zamorin's Calicut, and also link it with Mohammed bin Tughlaq's invasion of the Srirangam temple in Tamil Nadu in the 14th century AD.

Functionaries of the Calicut Heritage Forum, a Kozhikode-based group of history enthusiasts who work to preserve the city's cultural past, have come to this conclusion after going through temple records, historical data, and land records.

C.K. Ramachandran, convener of the forum and a former IAS officer, says that Azha Thrikkovil Goshala Vishnu Temple at Nellikode could have been built by Vaishnavite priests from the Srirangam temple who were running away from the Muslim invaders.

It is believed that the temple at Nellikode could have been built by Vaishnavite priests from the Srirangam temple. K. RAGESH

Azhvar Trikkovil

In the land records of Nellikode desam, the name of the temple is recorded as Azhvar Trikkovil, a possible reference to the original temple where the Nammalvar idol was installed. In the Tamil Vaishnava tradition, Azhvar means Nammalvar. The land records also show sizeable land grants which existed in the name of the temple. The name Azhvar could have got corrupted to Azha later, he says.

"According to the temple records, the forces of the Delhi Sultanate led by Ulugh Khan, the son and successor of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq who later assumed the name Mohammed bin Tughlaq, invaded Srirangam in 1323 AD," Mr. Ramachandran says.

"The priests of the temple, led by Pillai Lokacharya and a few others, escaped with the idol of Lord Ranganatha and that of the two consorts, Sridevi and Bhudevi," he says.

The team travelled stealthily to Tiruppathur, Thirukkoshtiyur, and Jyotishkudi, and then went to Tirumalirunjolai.

"They wanted to avoid a repeat of the situation when the forces of the then Delhi Sultan Alauddin Khalji managed to take away the main idol, which is supposed to have some 'magical powers', after looting the temple in 1311 AD. The temple authorities had to take a great deal of effort to bring it back," Mr. Ramachandran says.

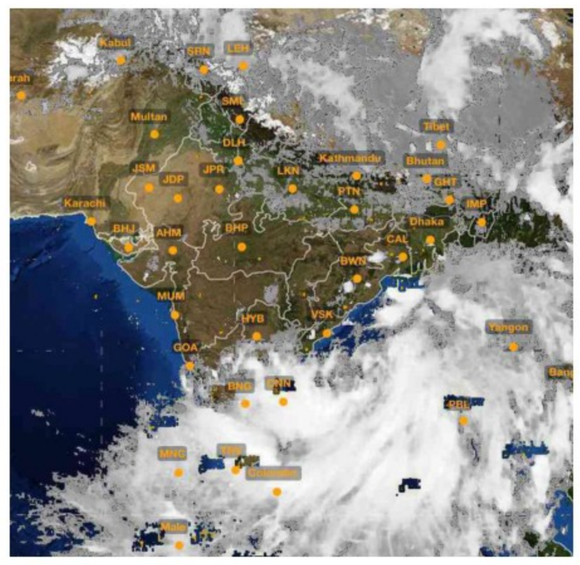
Koil Olugu, the record of events in the Srirangam temple at least from the 10th century AD, gives details of the flight of the Lord. But, it does not explain why the Sri Vaishnavas chose Kozhikode, recorded as 'Kolikkodu'.

Historian S. Krishna Swamy Ayyangar in his work *South India and Her Muhammedan Invaders* has written that "Going from temple to temple of the Vaishnava holy places on the west coast, they reached at last Calicut".

Mr. Ramachandran says that while one version of *Koil Olugu* says that they stayed in Kozhikode for a year, another version states that they stayed for a few days. He says the Srirangam team had stayed in Tirumalirunjolai for a year and this might have been used to build a new temple in Kozhikode to house Lord Ranganatha and his consorts.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, north Odisha, Kerala and Mahe. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Jammu division, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, east Uttar Pradesh, east Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	39.2	26.3	Kozhikode	31	32.4	24.4
Ahmedabad	—	44.4	30.1	Kurnool	21	35.5	25.8
Aizawl	2	37.2	22.8	Lucknow	—	41.7	31.3
Allahabad	—	43.6	31.0	Madurai	—	34.6	26.5
Bengaluru	1	30.7	21.6	Mangaluru	48	27.8	23.2
Bhopal	—	42.9	29.6	Mumbai	—	34.4	29.0
Bhubaneswar	—	38.5	27.9	Mysuru	28	—	—
Chandigarh	—	43.2	30.2	New Delhi	—	43.4	30.6
Chennai	—	38.0	29.0	Patna	—	40.9	30.6
Coimbatore	—	29.4	23.4	Port Blair	73.7	29.5	25.2
Dehradun	—	38.9	26.8	Puducherry	—	35.2	27.8
Gangtok	—	26.4	18.8	Pune	0.5	36.3	26.9
Goa	—	33.4	28.6	Raipur	—	40.4	29.3
Guwahati	—	40.1	26.7	Ranchi	—	37.4	24.8
Hubballi	—	33.0	25.0	Shillong	3	28.1	17.1
Hyderabad	—	39.9	27.8	Shimla	—	32.5	18.4
Imphal	—	31.3	22.1	Srinagar	—	30.7	13.8
Jaipur	—	43.8	31.2	Thiruvananthapuram	22	30.6	24.0
Kochi	88	29.8	24.0	Tiruchi	—	34.5	27.4
Kohima	20	28.9	16.6	Vijayawada	4	39.0	28.0
Kolkata	—	37.5	29.0	Visakhapatnam	—	32.4	29.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO₂	NO₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.24	.47	.31	167	132	
Bengaluru	.10	—	.12	49	149	
Chennai	5	8	105	82	61	
Delhi	.38	.18	.54	322	172	
Hyderabad	.29	.27	4	70	105	
Kolkata	7	.31	.25	58	53	
Lucknow	6	.36	.23	203	146	
Mumbai	9	.31	.32	73	133	
Pune	.00	.10	.69	113	93	
Visakhapatnam	.17	.58	.41	75	137	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 330 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INCOIS to bring out El Nino/La Nina outlook bulletins every month

INCOIS has come out with new products and services, including an El Nino/La Nina outlook. The bulletin is interesting since the El Nino and Southern Oscillation has become one of the most important climate modes in the tropical region

V. Geetanath
HYDERABAD

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has come out with new products and services, including an El Nino/La Nina outlook and an improved version of regional ocean analysis, by assimilating sea level anomalies and a probabilistic storm surge prediction system.

Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) secretary M. Ravichandran had unveiled the new services earlier this month when he had chaired a meeting of the institute here. El Nino/La Nina bulletin is quite interesting since the 'El Nino and Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has become one of the most important climate modes in the tropical region.

Scientists at the Tsunami Early Warning Centre of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services in Hyderabad. AFP

During the El Nino (warm) phase, the tropical central-eastern Pacific Ocean becomes anomalously warm and during the La Nina (cold) phase, it turns to anomalously cold. A reliable prediction is crucial for monitoring global climate patterns, regional monsoons and extreme weather events, explained director T. Srinivasa Kumar. Dynamic and statistical models are generally used to predict these systems with the lead time for such predictions being limited to one or two seasons.

INCOIS has developed a new method by blending the numerical models with an Artificial Intelligence (AI) /Machine Learning (ML) technique (Bayesian Neural Networks-BNN) to predict the evolution of the index of El Nino/La Nina with a lead time of 15-17 months.

Liquor policy: UDF demands judicial probe

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Opposition United Democratic Front has demanded a judicial inquiry into the allegations of corruption in the Left Democratic Front government's proposed move to liberalise Kerala's liquor policy.

UDF convener M.M. Hassan also demanded the resignation of Excise Minister M.B. Rajesh.

The controversy broke out after a voice note, purportedly of a district leader of the Federation of Kerala Hotel Association, asking bar owners to contribute ₹2.5 lakh each to sway the government to liberalise liquor policy, leaked out.

From Page One

Mob targets police station at Channagiri

The mob resorted to stone pelting, vandalised the police station and damaged at least eight police vehicles.

Uma Prashanth, Superintendent of Police, Davangere, said that Adil was in the station for hardly seven minutes.

"The probe will look into the CCTV footage and other evidence at the police station," she said. "We have received a complaint from Adil's father and action will be taken based on the post-mortem report," she said.

According to police sources, Adil, a carpenter by profession and resident of Tipu Nagar in Channagiri, was brought to the station for questioning in a gambling case. As he collapsed there, he was taken to the Channagiri hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Last rites

On Saturday, the body was brought to Davangere for post-mortem and subsequently handed over to the family for the last rites at Channagiri.

Speaking to presspersons in Davangere, Adil's father Khaleemulla, said that while Adil was suffering from low blood pressure, he was not aware what had transpired at the police station. He demanded that the government act against whoever was responsible for his son's death.

As the news of Adil's death became known, a mob resorted to agitation by keeping the body in front of the police station seeking justice for the family. As the mob indulged in violence, the police resorted to lathi-charge and lobbed teargas shells to disperse it.

Ms. Uma Prashanth and other senior officials had a tough time placating the family members.

The case led to a political slugfest between the Congress and the BJP. The Opposition charged that there was "breakdown of law and order" in the State and alleged the "appeasement politics of Congress" to be the reason behind such incidents.

Home Minister G. Parameshwara hit back at BJP, saying that the Opposition should desist from making "irresponsible statements".

He said a probe would be held into the custodial death and action would be taken against those who resorted to violence.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has denied reports about the "lock-up death".

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, he said the youth was suffering from epilepsy and was taken to hospital where he died. However, he found fault with the police for keeping the man in the police station without registering an FIR.

"He should have been sent back after questioning. He could not have been kept in the police station without registering an FIR. So, the police are at fault," he said.

Winged visitors

Water sharing: Flamingos descend on the drying Krishna bed at Srisailam in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana on Saturday. NAGARA GOPAL

Waiting time for free darshan on Tirumala shoots up to 30 hours

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUMALA

The waiting time for darshan of Lord Venkateswara for the pilgrims reaching the town without any kind of darshan tickets on Saturday shot up to 30 hours.

The queue lines stretched out to a couple of kilometres outside the Vaikuntam complex.

Officials attributed the sudden spurt in the crowd to the summer vacations coupled with the weekend holidays.

2.60 lakh devotees

According to statistics around 2.60 lakh devotees trekked to the temple town in the past 10 days.

Special arrangements were made for supply of free food and water to the pilgrims at the waiting complex as well as those in the darshan lines.

Food distribution points were set up at four vantage locations where the congregation of pilgrims was more felt in addition to 27 drinking water points.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) also had arranged free bus services for ferrying pilgrims to Silathoranam circle enabling them to join the queue lines without any confusion.

The TTD has cancelled the VIP darshan on the three days of the weekend till June 30.

Aarogyasri services resume in A.P.

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

Private hospitals in Andhra Pradesh have resumed all services under the YSR Aarogyasri scheme on Saturday after an assurance by the Chief Secretary K.S. Jawahar Reddy to release ₹300 crore towards the clearance of pending bills in a week.

The government already remitted ₹203 crore a couple of days ago following the stoppage of services under the State-sponsored health insurance scheme as per a decision taken by the A.P. Super Specialty Hospitals' Association (ASHA).

Kerala's caravan tourism project not yet on track

John L. Paul
KOCHI

Despite the perception that Kerala – with its good mix of hills, plains, backwaters and beach destinations – is an ideal destination for caravan tourism, the project launched with much fanfare in 2021 has failed to take off as expected.

Stakeholders attribute this to the high daily rent of ₹25,000 per caravan, narrow and ill-maintained roads in the high ranges, and inadequate number of caravan parks in the State.

Christened Keravan Kerala, Kerala Tourism had portrayed it as an innovative product that will enhance the potential of the State as a tourism destination. Tourists can have safe, customised, and closest-to-nature travel experience at unexplored destinations, it had said.

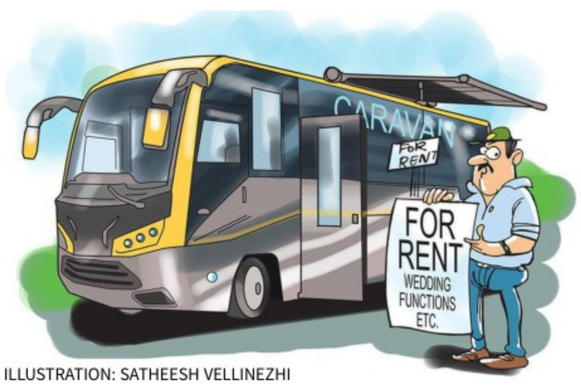


ILLUSTRATION: SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

'Better roads a must'

Tom Abraham, a homestay owner at Wagamon, was among those who were keen to invest in the project. "The project would have taken off if it was marketed better. Few tourists knew about it," he says. He cites the need for well-maintained wider roads and dedicated caravan parks to park the vehicles.

Echoing a similar view, Denny Thomas, a tourism entrepreneur who rents out his five-acre island off Kochi to host events, says caravan parks can well be readied in islands and on the coast. For this, local bodies must ensure road connectivity. Sadly, many local bodies and enforcement agencies view tourism activities with suspicion, he says.

Although Kerala Tourism received applications to operate 439 caravans and 146 caravan parks, just over a dozen caravans and a caravan park at Wagamon were readied in the past three years. This has been attributed to hassles in getting no-objection certificate (NOC) from local bodies and the departments concerned.

A senior tourism official says the project would have taken off in a big way, but for it losing the initial momentum due to inadequate marketing and the delay in readying infrastructure such as water, power supply, garbage disposal, cafeteria, toilets, security, CCTVs, drivers' room, and parking bays at the parks.

"The high rent for caravans is yet another crucial factor, and per-person fare too must be reasonably priced," he says.

Responding to the concerns, Kerala Tourism secretary K. Biju says caravan tourism is an evolving idea and initial hiccups are bound to occur. "Discussions are being held with stakeholders and policy changes will be made, if needed. Already, subsidy is being given to buy caravans," he adds.

From Page One

EC releases number of votes cast in five phases

Though the poll body has reiterated that the voter turnout data is available to all polling agents of the candidates, the situation on the ground is different.

The Hindu had spoken to a host of ground workers of political parties and civil society members last week, who had argued that it was not possible for all parties, specially, smaller ones and Independent candidates, to put up polling agents at each booth.

'Big victory'

Civil society organisations that had petitioned the EC requesting release of the data welcomed the move.

"Big victory for peoples' Right to Information! ECI releases voter turnout figures in absolute numbers. Important step by ECI, though this could have been done sooner. The demand to disclose Form 17C must continue as that is the only statutory authenticated record of voter turnout," Anjali Bharadwaj, director of Common Cause, one of the petitioners, posted on X.

According to the data released by the EC on Saturday, the highest number of votes were cast in Dhubri constituency in Assam (24.5 lakh), while the least votes were polled in Lakshadweep (48,630).

The first phase polled 11,00,52,103 votes (of a total 16,63,86,344 registered voters), the second phase 10,58,30,572 votes (out of 15,86,45,484), the third 11,32,34,676 (out of 17,24,04,907), fourth 12,24,69,319 (out of 17,70,75,629), and fifth phase recorded 5,57,10,618 votes (out of 8,95,67,973) voters.

61.2% voting in sixth phase of LS polls

In J&K, Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti, who is the contestant from the seat, staged a sit-in outside the Bijbehara police station on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway claiming that her party workers and polling agents were detained. The police, however, said those detained are overground workers and the action was taken to ensure smooth conduct of elections.

In West Bengal, clashes broke out between workers of the Trinamool Congress and the BJP in Ghatal, Medinipur and Tamluk Lok Sabha constituencies.

Incidents of violence were reported from parts of the Kanthi constituency, while in the Medinipur constituency, BJP candidate Agnimitra Paul faced "go back" slogans from Trinamool workers. A scuffle broke out between the BJP and the Trinamool workers, resulting in Central forces rushing to the spot to disperse the mob.

In Tamluk, a group of people shouted slogans against BJP candidate and former Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay.

"The Election Commission of India has received 954 complaints until 11 a.m. from various political parties, alleging EVM malfunctions and agents being stopped from entering booths," an official of the State poll panel said.

A total of 58 Lok Sabha seats in eight States and Union Territories voted on Saturday to decide the fates of 889 candidates.

27 killed in blaze at Rajkot gaming zone

Firefighters and local residents during rescue operations after fire broke out in in Rajkot. AP

"The fire tragedy in Rajkot has saddened us all. In my telephone conversation with him a short while ago, Gujarat CM Bhupendrabhai Patel Ji told me about the efforts underway to ensure all possible assistance is provided to those who have been affected," Mr. Modi wrote on X.

The Prime Minister said he has asked the Chief Minister to ensure stern action against those found guilty.

The Gujarat Chief Minister announced the setting up of a special investigation team headed by additional DGP Subhash Trivedi and consisting of experts to probe the incident. Mr. Patel announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh to the families who lost their loved ones and ₹50,000 to those injured.

After the incident, the Gujarat DGP directed the police to launch an inspection of all play zones across the State and shut down those without a NOC from the fire department.

"It is a man-made disaster in Rajkot. How such a sprawling zone operated in the city without adequate fire protection infrastructure and nobody has any idea what was the capacity of the zone and how many people were inside," a resident of Rajkot said.

The police have arrested the owner of the play zone, its manager and two others.

Parliament adds facilities for new MPs

With members of the 18th Lok Sabha to assume charge in June, new pathways, reception lounges and waiting areas are being constructed at the ₹970-crore Parliament complex, which is also being refurbished to accommodate the requirements of the CISF that took over the security

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The temperature is hovering above 41 degrees Celsius, but construction is on in full swing in Parliament.

Racing against time, several new structures, including roads and reception lounges, are being built to welcome the members of the 18th Lok Sabha in June.

As dust blew in the air, labourers crushed with hammers the red sandstone-topped pathways laid only last year. As part of a green initiative, they will be replaced with cobbled pathways made of black stones brought from Karnataka.

Several pockets had been dug up by earthmovers, and labourers milled around the compound when *The Hindu* visited the complex on May 22.

"These are special stones, they are being evenly spread leaving a gap of a few centimetres to prevent waterlogging. When it poured, the concrete structure led to accumulation of water. The new pathway will recharge groundwater and help in rainwater harvesting as the water will percolate to the ground," said a Parliament official on condition of anonymity.

In progress: Renovation of the new Parliament complex goes on in full swing, ahead of the arrival of the new Lok Sabha members. VIJAITA SINGH

Another official added that two new waiting areas are being constructed after bringing down existing structures in the compound. "The waiting areas or offices on either end will be of help to the new members of Parliament. It will be a holding area before they proceed to the House as many would be first-time members," said the second official.

The new Parliament building was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May last year. The four-storey building, built at an estimated cost of ₹970 crore, held its first special sitting on September 19, 2023. It faces the British-era Parliament building, or the Samvidhan Sadan, which will now be conserved as a heritage asset.

Officials said due to the digging of roads at several places, several electrical lines had been uprooted. "The air conditioner here has not been working for the past two months due to the ongoing construction. As there are no fans and this room is supposed to be centrally air-conditioned, there is little we can do," said a security person posted at the main reception office in the Parliament complex on Red Cross Road.

The office is also being refurbished to accommodate the requirements of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) that recently took over the security of the Parliament complex.

After the security breach on December 13, 2023, when two unarmed men jumped into the Well of the Lok Sabha with colour sprays, a slew of security measures was taken, and a committee, set up to study the lapses, suggested handing over of the Parliament security to the CISF. Facial recognition devices were installed at various points then.

A day before the breach, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) had floated a tender for additional security infrastructure for the Parliament complex, including security gadgets and bulletproof enclosures, at a cost of ₹35 crore.

The tender document for the project said that the work would include redevelopment of the reception lounge, security blocks, electrical services and external development, including sewerage and drainage.

UAPA tribunal upholds Centre's ban on seven Meitei extremist organisations

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A tribunal under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) has upheld the Centre's decision to declare seven valley-based Meitei extremist organisations as "unlawful associations" for the next five years.

The order said that in the past five years, the seven outfits were responsible for 335 of 689 violent incidents reported in Manipur, in which nine security personnel and 21 civilians were killed.

The outfits that espouse the secession of Manipur from India operate camps from Myanmar and Bangladesh to provide arms training to cadres and a safe sanctuary for the procurement of arms and ammunition. The order mentions that the insurgent groups are closely linked with the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah), which has been engaged in peace talks with the Centre since 1997.

The Ministry said the groups are involved in violent and illegal activities.

The Union Home Ministry informed the tribunal that the outfits through their front organisations and civil society groups are also engaged in "targeting non-local population, protesting against peace talks of authorities with other ethnic groups of the State, boycotting national days like Republic Day, and opposing merger of Manipur with Indian Union".

The Ministry submitted that in Manipur, militant activities are carried out by Meitei extremist organisations, also called Valley-based insurgent groups, which include the Peoples' Liberation Army and its political wing the Revolutionary Peoples' Front; the United National Liberation Front; the Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak and its armed wing the Red Army; the Kangleipak Communist Party and its armed wing also called the Red Army; the Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup; the Coordination Committee; and the Alliance for Socialist Unity Kangleipak.

The Ministry said the groups are involved in violent and illegal activities.

"The Union of India has brought to the notice of this Tribunal that the cadre strength of these extremist organisations is approximately 1,250. These extremist organisations have highly sophisticated weapons, arms and ammunitions, explosive devices with weaponry numbering 1,559 approximately," the order said.

Man uses voice-changing app to pose as woman professor; rapes seven girls

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Police have sought support from cyber experts to include the app maker in the investigation

Seven girls were raped in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh allegedly by a man who used a voice-changing app to pose as a woman professor and lured them with scholarship offers to a secluded farm.

The Madhya Pradesh Police have arrested Brajesh Prajapati, 30, a labourer, and three of his accomplices in the case. A nine-member special investigation team (SIT), constituted on an order by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, has started investigation.

The police said four FIRs had been registered involving five victims, of whom four were raped. One of the raped girls is a minor, Superintendent of Police, Sidhi, Ravindra Verma, told *The Hindu*.

FIRs have been lodged under Sections 376 (2) (N), 354, 506, 342, 366, and 294 of the Indian Penal Code at the Majhauli police station. Section 3/4 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 has been invoked in the case relating to the minor girl, he said.

The accused has admitted to the rape of three other girls, the Majhauli police station in-charge Deepak Baghel, who is part of the SIT, said.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Roshni Singh Thakur, who is heading the SIT, said while Mr. Brajesh was the mastermind, Sandeep Prajapati, 23, Rahul Prajapati, 23, and Luvkush Prajapati, 24, helped him. They also snatched phones and other valuables from the girls and sold them.

Mr. Verma said Mr. Brajesh targeted the first girl after he got her contact from Mr. Luvkush. Mr. Brajesh snatched the victim's phone and took the contact details of more girls.

He used an app to change his voice and introduced himself as "Ranjana madam". The SP said Mr. Brajesh would target girls who had turned 18 and tell them that they had been selected for a government scholarship. "He would tell that they need to come and sign documents to get the money. He would then pick up the girls, introducing himself as the professor's son," Mr. Verma said.

He said the police had written to the State Cyber Cell and had sought support from cyberexperts to include the app maker in the investigation.

Terming the news "extremely disturbing", former Chief Minister Kamal Nath wrote on X, "Can't girls from the tribal community in Madhya Pradesh even study in college without fear? What is the meaning of the slogan - *Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao*?"

Remal to turn severe cyclone, make landfall in West Bengal, Bangladesh

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The deep depression over the east-central Bay of Bengal on Saturday evening intensified into a cyclonic storm, "Remal", and is likely to cross Bangladesh and the adjoining West Bengal coasts by Sunday midnight. The weather pattern is likely to continue to move nearly northwards and intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by Sunday morning. It is expected to cross the coasts between Sagar Island (West Bengal) and Khepupara (Bangladesh) around Sunday midnight with a wind speed of 110-120 kmph gusting to 135 kmph.

A special bulletin by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said: "The deep depression over east-central Bay of Bengal moved nearly northward with a speed of 12 kmph during the past 6 hours, intensified into cyclonic Storm "Remal" and lay centered at 17:30 hrs IST of today, the 25th May 2024 over the north & adjoining east central Bay of Bengal near latitude 18.8°N and longitude 89.5°E."

Storm surge: A street flooded during rain under the influence of the cyclone in Vijayawada on Saturday. G.N. RAO

The IMD has issued an orange alert in Kolkata, Howrah, Nadia, Jhargram, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur districts. It has predicted "heavy (7-11 cm) to very heavy rain (12-20 cm) at a few places over North and South 24 Parganas, East Midnapore, Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts" of southern Bengal. The IMD has predicted extremely heavy rain (over 20 cm) to be very likely at one or two places over North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore districts.

The weather office has cautioned about gale wind speed reaching 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph from Saturday evening. "It would increase further and extend to adjoining areas of north Bay of Bengal becoming gale wind speed reaching 70-80 kmph gusting to 90 kmph from evening of today, the 25th May and 100-110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph over North Bay of Bengal from morning and 110-120 kmph gusting to 135 kmph from evening of 26th May," the special bulletin said. A red alert has been issued for fishermen advising them not to venture into the sea along and off West Bengal coast and deep sea area of the Bay of Bengal till May 27.

The National Disaster Response Force has stationed 12 teams across coastal areas of West Bengal.

The authorities of Kolkata airport have decided to suspend flight operations for 21 hours from Sunday noon in view of the possible impact of cyclone Remal, an official said.

Rajasthan to review quota to Muslims under OBC category

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The BJP government in Rajasthan is set to review the reservation in jobs and education granted to Muslims under the Other Backward Class (OBC) category.

A high-level committee is likely to be appointed soon for examining the classification of certain Muslim groups as OBCs in the State and make recommendations. Rajasthan's Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Avinash Gehlot said here on Saturday that the Congress had given reservation to 14 Muslim groups under the OBC category "as part of its appeasement politics" between 1997 and 2013 despite the Constitution disallowing reservation on the basis of religion.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY
(Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India)
Opp Hitech City, Madhapur, Hyderabad – 500 081.
Ph.No. 04023110841

NIFT/HYD/ADMIN./IT Scrap/2024 Dated: 24.05.2024

TENDER NOTICE FOR SALE/DISPOSAL OF SCRAP (IT ITEMS)

Sealed tenders are invited for Sale/Disposal of **SCRAP (IT ITEMS) "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** of NIFT Centre, Hyderabad. The interested parties/bidders/agencies may visit our NIFT website **www.nift.ac.in.hyderabad** for detailed information. For further details, you may contact Administration Department on any working days during office hours.

NIFT reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons.

Director

ELECTIONS 2024

DELHI

Moment of pride: A woman after casting her first vote during the Lok Sabha election on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Making it count: Voters queue up at a polling station in Anantnag district of the Union Territory. NISSAR AHMAD

UTTAR PRADESH

Many faces, one intent: People standing in a queue to cast their votes in Sultanpur. SANDEEP SAXENA

ODISHA

Braving the odds: A voter with disabilities arrives at a polling station to vote in Bhubaneswar. BISWARANJAN ROUT

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti after casting her vote in Anantnag district on Saturday. NISSAR AHMAD

54.3% turnout in Anantnag; PDP alleges rigging

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Anantnag-Rajouri constituency in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded a 54.3% voter turnout, shows the latest figure, as against 14.3% in 2019. The day, however, was marred by protests and allegations of "tactical rigging" by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president and candidate Mehbooba Mufti.

The polling recorded in Anantnag is the highest in 35 years. The overall voter turnout across all five Lok Sabha constituencies in J&K was 58%, higher than the 49.58% recorded in 2014 and 47.99% in 1996.

"It is the highest turnout for these five seats in the last 40 years. The previous high was 49.58% recorded in 2014," Chief Electoral Officer P.K. Pole said, as the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha election saw the completion of the poll process in all the five Lok Sabha constituencies in the Union Territory.

However, Ms. Mufti raised questions about the fairness of the election process, and alleged that hundreds of her polling agents and workers were detained "in a bid to resort to tactical rigging". "Cordon-and-search operation was launched at places to terrorise voters. The role played by Lieutenant-Governor (Manoj Sinha) and Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) of Police Altaf Khan has been very negative. Unfortunately, this has stained the process of free and fair elections started by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It was an attempt to repeat 1987," Ms. Mufti said.

Anantnag district, the home district of Ms. Mufti, recorded the lowest voter turnout of 33.47% in the Anantnag Assembly segment and 36.92% in the Anantnag West Assembly segment.

Gulshan Begam, mother of PDP leader Adil Dukroo, 28, a resident of Bijbehara's Zirpora area, told *The Hindu* that her son was detained on Friday evening. "My son had gone to attend a meeting of the party leaders. He was not facing any police case and has a clean past. My son and another leader Najmu Saqib are the eyes and ears of Ms. Mufti in her hometown. They were detained to ensure a low voter turnout," Ms. Begum said. Both the detained PDP leaders, Mr. Dukroo and Mr. Saqib, were released after Ms. Mufti held a sit-in in front of the Bijbehara police station.

According to the police, "a very few with a tainted past were detained and restricted". "Mostly they are overground workers and were taken into preventive custody for ensuring a safe and peaceful election," a police official said.

Delhi voter turnout drops to 57.67% as AAP, Cong. appeal to 'save democracy'

Voting took place in several parts of the city, which is reeling under a severe heatwave that made it difficult for voters to come out at midday; efforts were made to spread awareness amongst 1.52 crore voters in the seven constituencies; in the previous LS election, Delhi had a turnout of 60.6%

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

An approximate voter turnout trend of 57.67% was recorded in Delhi, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said here on Saturday. This was not the final voting percentage as approximate trends from some polling booths would take time, and the figures did not include postal ballot data, he added.

Voting took place in several parts of the city, which is reeling under a severe heatwave that made it difficult for voters to come out at midday.

Arrangements were made for refreshments and air coolers for the voters' comfort. As voters trickled in, party workers and resident welfare associations encouraged citizens to participate by going door-to-door and messaging on WhatsApp groups. Many showed up with water, soft drinks and other refreshments for the staff manning the polling stations.

Efforts were made to spread awareness amongst 1.52 crore voters in the seven constituencies.

Marking the future: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with sister Priyanka Gandhi show their inked fingers after casting their votes in New Delhi on Saturday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Steady decline

The approximate voter turnout trend was at its lowest in the New Delhi constituency at 53.86%, while it was the highest in North-east Delhi at 62.87%.

In South Delhi, the voter turnout was 55.15%. In Chandni Chowk, it was 58.06%, in East Delhi 57.83%, in Northwest Delhi 57.06%, and in West Delhi it was 58.28%.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Delhi had recorded a turnout of 60.6% against the national voter turnout of 67.4%. In 2014, the capital had recorded 65.10% voter turnout against the national voter turnout of 66.44%.

Owing to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress's four-to-three seat sharing alliance in Delhi, Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, who votes from the Chandni Chowk constituency, and the Congress's Gandhi family, including Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who vote from the New Delhi seat, found themselves in constituencies where they had no candidates belonging to their own respective parties.

Mr. Kejriwal is currently on interim bail, after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate. The Delhi CM's family voted along with him.

162 candidates

There are 162 candidates in the fray for the Delhi Lok Sabha election.

Most candidates began the day early by offering prayers before voting with their families and supporters.

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union Ministers Hardeep Singh Puri and S. Jaishankar, and Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud voted from the New Delhi constituency.

Speaking after voting, several leaders from the AAP, the Congress, and the BJP expressed confidence that their campaign had translated into votes, assuring their victory.

While the AAP and the Congress appealed to the voters to vote in numbers against the BJP as it would be their last attempt to "save democracy", the BJP said the people of Delhi had seen through the "hypocrisy" of the AAP-Congress alliance.

The BJP has won all seven Lok Sabha constituencies in the national capital for two terms now.

Delhi's voters, who voted the AAP to power in the State Assembly election with a huge majority in two previous elections, and the BJP in the two previous Lok Sabha elections also with a significant majority, said they had voted keeping national as well as local issues in mind.

Chaos reigns in Jhargram as BJP candidate is attacked; Ghatal nominee comes under siege

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate was attacked and another was gheraoed on Saturday during the penultimate phase of election in West Bengal across eight Lok Sabha constituencies spread across the southern part of the State.

Across the eight seats that cover five districts, a 79.47% turnout was reported, according to the latest figure. Bishnupur, a seat reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates, registered 83.95% polling, while Purulia, reserved for Scheduled Tribe candidates, recorded the lowest voting of 75.37%.

The Tamluk constituency witnessed 80.22% polling and Kanthi registered 77.75%. Polling in Jhargram was 81.53% and Ghatal 80.73%. In Medinipur, 79.75% of the voters exercised their franchise, while Bankura registered 79.03% polling.

Pranat Tudu, the BJP candidate from Jhargram, was attacked allegedly by Trinamool Congress supporters at Garbeta. The mob threw stones on the vehicle of the BJP candidate and a person deployed for Mr. Tudu's security sustained head injury. Mr. Tudu and a Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) man deployed in his security were seen running away from the mob.

Tough stance: Security forces shield BJP candidate Hiran Chatterjee as protesters stop his convoy at Ghatal on Saturday. ANI

Chaos reigned in the area for almost an hour and there was no intervention of quick response teams of the Election Commission. Vehicles of media personnel were also attacked at Garbeta.

Demand for re-polling

The BJP candidate said he was getting reports of electoral malpractices and a section of residents have been threatening the voters of the party since Friday night. Yet, when he visited the area, he was attacked by Trinamool supporters.

"If security forces personnel were not present, the people would have lynched me," Mr. Tudu said. Another BJP candidate, Hiran Chatterjee, who is contesting from the Ghatal Lok Sabha constituency, also faced protests by Trinamool supporters in Keshpur area of the constituency who surrounded his vehicles and raised slogans.

Mr. Chatterjee, who raised the demand for re-polling in Keshpur, said the region had turned into a "Pakistan or Afghanistan" during the polling.

While places like Garbeta and Keshpur, which have a history of electoral violence remained on the boil, polling was peaceful at Nandigram, which had witnessed political violence earlier this week resulting in the murder of a 56-year-old woman BJP supporter.

Tamil Nadu 'contractors' steering BJD govt.: Irani

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Union Minister and senior BJP leader Smriti Irani on Saturday said governance in Odisha was being dictated by "contractors" from Tamil Nadu.

Ms. Irani was alluding to the alleged dominance of V.K. Pandian – Tamil Nadu-born former IAS officer and former private secretary to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik – in governance and in the affairs of the Biju Janata Dal.

At campaign rallies, the BJP leader said the State government, which was being remotely controlled from T.N., was clueless when natural disasters such as floods and cyclones hit the State.

President votes at pink booth in New Delhi

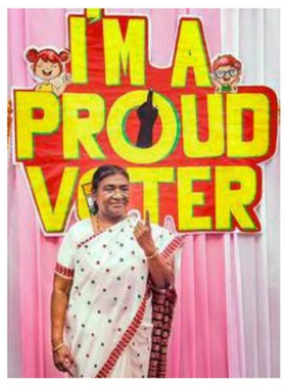
President Droupadi Murmu cast her vote at an all-woman polling booth in the New Delhi constituency on Saturday in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha election, officials said.

Ms. Murmu reached the booth, decorated in pink and white colours, inside the President's Estate around 9 a.m., they said.

Later, the President held up her inked finger as she posed for photos for presspersons against a backdrop that read "I'm a proud voter".

Ms. Murmu, who hails from Odisha, was sworn in as the 15th President of India on July 25, 2022.

She received her new voter identification card with the updated address on November 28 last year. Her old voter ID carried her Odisha address. PTI



President Droupadi Murmu after casting her vote on Saturday. PTI

CPI(M) leader slams EC as EVM goes dead

CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat on Saturday alleged she had to wait for almost an hour to cast her vote as the battery of the EVM control unit at her polling booth "drained out".

The Election Commission, however, said voting was halted only for 15 minutes.

Ms. Karat had gone to cast her vote at a polling booth at St. Columba's School in the New Delhi constituency.

"I have written a complaint here, how is it that in the morning at 9 a.m. the battery of the machine is down? What are the arrangements that they have made? People are waiting here in the heat for so long," she told presspersons.

Ms. Karat later said she had to wait for around 50 minutes.

The machine had been down for around 20 minutes before she arrived. PTI

> Cong. is trying to frighten us by saying that Pak. has an atom bomb.... And, today I speak from this land, that PoK is ours and it will remain ours
>
> **AMIT SHAH**
> Union Home Minister

'Need no remark from sponsors of terrorism'

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday chastised former Pakistan Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, saying the Lok Sabha elections are India's internal matter and that the country will not tolerate interference by the "biggest sponsors of terrorism". PTI

> Modi*ji* and senior BJP leaders are attacking the Constitution. For the first time, their leaders have openly said they will change it if they win
>
> **RAHUL GANDHI**
> Congress leader

INBRIEF

Pune car crash: grandfather of minor driver arrested

The Pune police on Saturday arrested the grandfather of the 17-year-old boy who allegedly ran over two IT professionals while driving a Porsche car recklessly in the city. According to the police, the grandfather had reportedly threatened the family driver to give out a statement taking the blame for the accident. He was threatened not to speak to anyone about it, said City Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar. "Before the minor's father was arrested, he, along with the juvenile's grandfather, offered cash and gifts to their family driver who was later threatened to take all the blame. They are booked for kidnapping and wrongful confinement of the driver," Mr. Kumar said.

Custodial death: suspension of 3 policemen withdrawn

The Assam Police on Saturday withdrew the suspension of three of its personnel in Lakhimpur district after the death of a person accused of theft at the Khelmati outpost was found to be due to a heart ailment. The police also arrested 15 people, including two minors, for throwing stones at the outpost.. Arsabh Ali was detained in connection with the theft of a mobile phone. "Preliminary post-mortem reports are indicative of the death of the person in police custody due to a pre-existing coronary disease. The Superintendent of Police has been directed to withdraw the suspension orders," Assam DGP Gyanendra Pratap Singh said.

South Africa to follow up on arrest of Gupta brothers

South Africa on Saturday said it will engage with the Indian government following reports of the arrest of two Gupta brothers in India, one of whom is wanted for allegedly looting billions from state-owned enterprises. Atul, Ajay, and Rajesh Gupta, from an Indian-origin family, have been accused of siphoning billions of rands in South Africa through their close association with former President Jacob Zuma. The trio and their families fled to Dubai after Zuma was ousted from the presidency in 2018. In 2023, the UAE refused the request for the extradition of Mr. Rajesh and Mr. Atul following which South Africa declared them fugitives. PTI

Persistent heat makes Assam districts revise school timings

A few districts across Assam, including Kamrup (Metropolitan) which largely includes Guwahati, have advanced school timings due to "continuous rise in mercury level and prevailing scorching heat". A few districts, including Bongaigaon, Majuli and Jorhat, revised school timings a few days ago to 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. from the normal 9 a.m. The temporary change in schedule in the other districts will be applicable from May 27, Education Department officials said. According to the new timetable, classes will start at 7.30 a.m. and end at noon for primary schools and 1 p.m. for high and higher secondary schools.

SUDOKU

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No.SS6170 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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3	9	6	8	1	2	5	7	4
4	5	8	7	3	9	2	6	1
1	2	7	4	6	5	3	8	9
7	6	2	3	4	8	9	1	5
9	8	4	2	5	1	7	3	6
5	1	3	6	9	7	4	2	8

Double treat at Cannes as Payal and Anasuya bag awards

Press Trust of India
CANNES

Filmmaker Payal Kapadia winning the Grand Prix Award for *All We Imagine As Light* at Cannes Film Festival; actors Rohit Kokate, Omara Shetty, Bulgarian director Konstantin Bojanov and Anasuya Sengupta arrive for the screening of the film *The Shameless*. GETTY IMAGES, AFP

India received a double treat at the Cannes Film Festival this year, with filmmaker Payal Kapadia taking home the Grand Prix award for her spellbinding drama *All We Imagine as Light* and Anasuya Sengupta, one of the lead stars of the film *The Shameless*, bagging the the Best Actress award in the Un Certain Regard category.

The Grand Prix award is the second-most prestigious prize of the festival after the Palme d'Or, while the Un Certain Regard celebrates films with unusual styles and non-traditional stories.

Ms. Kapadia's feature directorial debut, which screened on Thursday night and has received glowing reviews in the international press, already registered its name in the history books after it became the first Indian film in 30 years and first-ever by an Indian woman director to be showcased in the main competition.

The screening of the film received an eight-minute standing ovation from the audience members. *All We Imagine as Light*, a Malayalam-Hindi feature, has two nurses as the protagonists. An alumna of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Ms. Kapadia is best known for her acclaimed documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing*, which premiered at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival's Director's Fortnight sidebar where it won the Oeil d'or (Golden Eye) award.

The main competition jury was chaired by filmmaker Greta Gerwig and also included Spanish director Juan Antonio Bayona, Turkish actor-screenwriter Ebru Ceylan, Italian actor Pierfrancesco Favino, American actor Lily Gladstone, Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda, Lebanese actor-director Nadine Labaki and French stars Eva Green and French actor Omar Sy.

Ms. Sengupta, who starred in Bulgarian director Konstantin Bojanov's Hindi movie *The Shameless*, is the first Indian artist to win the top acting honour in the Un Certain Regard category.

In her acceptance speech on Friday night, Ms. Sengupta dedicated the award to the "queer community and other marginalised communities" for bravely fighting for their rights all over the world.

Fight for equality

"You don't have to be queer to fight for equality, you don't have to be colonised to know that colonising is pathetic – we just need to be very, very decent human beings," the actor said.

The win at Cannes is a landmark moment in Ms. Sengupta's career. She earlier played a supporting part in the 2009 Bengali film *Madly Bangalee*, directed by Anjan Dutt, and worked as a production designer after shifting to Mumbai.

The Shameless, which had its premiere at Cannes on May 17, forays into a dark, disturbing world of exploitation and misery in which two sex workers, one who bears the scars of her line of work, the other a young girl days away from ritual initiation, forge a bond and seek to throw off their shackles. Ms. Sengupta plays the central character of Renuka, who escapes from a Delhi brothel after stabbing a policeman to death and takes refuge in a community of sex workers in northern India, where she meets Devika (Omara), a young girl condemned to a life of sex work.

The actor celebrated her win on Instagram, where she posted pictures with Un Certain Regard jury head, Canadian director Xavier Dolan, and German-Luxembourg star Vicky Krieps. "I won, guys, held so lovingly by my heroes. I'm here for you, to be the one you need THANK YOU @festivaldecannes," Ms. Sengupta wrote in the caption.

Sean Baker's *Anora* crowned with Palme d'Or

Anora, a raw, highly explicit and often hilarious story about a New York erotic dancer, was crowned with the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday. It confirmed its director Sean Baker as one of the leading voices of American indie cinema. AFP

INDIA snatching quota to aid those who do 'vote jihad': PM

He says if Opposition bloc wants to accept servitude of vote bank, it's free to do so but he will not allow stealing of quota of SC/STs and OBCs; RJD says it is worried about Modi and his language

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Narendra Modi with Bihar Deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha and LJP (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan attending a public meeting. PTI

On a day when polling was held for eight seats in Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a campaign meeting on Saturday at Bikram in the Pataliputra Lok Sabha constituency in the State which goes to the polls in the next phase, said he would not let anyone snatch reservation from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

"Our Constitution says no reservation can be given on the basis of religion, but this INDI alliance people have snatched the SC, ST, OBC reservation and given it to their vote bank who do 'vote jihad'," Mr. Modi said.

"In West Bengal, 77 Muslim castes were given benefits of OBC reservation in government jobs. Rights of OBC and EBC families were snatched for those practising 'vote jihad'. If the INDI bloc wants to accept the servitude of their vote bank, they are free to do so... if they want to perform *mujra* (traditional Indian musical dance), they are free to do so," he said.

"This is Modi's guarantee. I will not let the SC, ST, OBC reservation snatched away as for Modi, Constitution is above all," he said. "These Congress, RJD and INDI allies have done big betrayal against SC, ST and OBC people. They have committed robbery on their reservation quota," he alleged while taking a few names of castes belonging to such categories.

Reacting to the comments, RJD leader and Rajya Sabha member Manoj Jha said he was worried about what Mr. Modi said in the public meeting. "I am worried about him now. Till yesterday, we disagreed with him but now we are worried about him. I recently said that he [Modi] is becoming a victim of delusion of grandeur. *Machli* (fish), mutton, *mangalsutra* (sacred thread) and now *mujra*...is this the language of a PM," he asked.

The BJP has fielded Ram Kripal Yadav, MP, against RJD leader Misa Bharati, who is the daughter of Lalu Prasad, in Pataliputra.

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc leaders, Mr. Modi said: "They are known for three things. They are communal, casteist and dynasts." "They first think of their family. Can such people do better for Bihar," the PM asked. "*Apna kaam banta... mein jaye Janata* (our job is being done and let people go to...)," Mr. Modi said uttering a common phrase and the gathered crowd completed the sentence.

He said that in the next five years, everyone, irrespective of being poor or rich, would get "free electricity". "Your electricity bill will be zero. We have introduced PM Suryaghar free electricity programme for this through solar electricity," he said. "For the solar panel, we have started giving ₹75,000 to every household and one has to only register his name online for this."

Later, Mr. Modi also addressed public meetings at Karakat and Buxar constituencies where the NDA candidates are contesting the polls.

Opposition leaders slam PM's remarks in Pataliputra meeting

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge

With just four days left before campaigning for the 2024 Lok Sabha election draws to a close, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks, made at election rallies in Bihar, where he accused the Opposition of performing *mujra* (a dance form associated with courtesans) for the Muslim vote bank, has come under sharp criticism from the Opposition, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge saying Mr. Modi's comments belied his anxiety over the election results.

Mr. Modi made this remark in the Pataliputra Lok Sabha constituency, where Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Misa Bharati is contesting against the incumbent two-time BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav.

The PM repeated the remarks at other rallies in Bihar.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said the PM's language had been deteriorating as the elections proceeded. "PM Modi is using such language that even his supporters are not liking it," Mr. Yadav said.

Mr. Modi also reiterated his remark that the State governments led by Opposition parties are splicing the quota meant for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC), and diverting them to Muslims, who were carrying out a "vote jihad" in the election.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that Mr. Modi's speech was unprecedented. "Never before has an Indian Prime Minister deployed such a language," she said in Gorakhpur.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) [(CPI-M)] leader Brinda Karat said that under Mr. Modi's terms of the past 10 years, the rights of reservation had been severely diluted.

With bypolls, Himachal 'turncoats' now face the people's court

Vikas Vasudeva
KUTLEHAR/BARSAR

Supporters of Congress attending a public meeting in Shimla of party chief Mallikarjun Kharge. X/@SUKHUSUKHVINDER

The Congress-ruled State of Himachal Pradesh saw political turbulence a few months ago with six of its MLAs turning rebels. With all of them now contesting as candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the byelections to six Assembly seats, a strong sentiment among the people surrounding "betrayal by turncoats" appears to have gripped the political narrative in the hill State, which will also witnesses the Lok Sabha election on June 1.

The stage is all set for a direct fight between the ruling Congress and the BJP for the upcoming byelections. These byelections were necessitated after the six Assembly seats – Dharamshala, Sujanpur, Lahaul-Spiti, Barsar, Gagret, and Kutlehar – fell vacant following the disqualification of the Congress MLAs from the Legislative Assembly for defying a party whip in February. Later, all these six Congress rebels joined the BJP and are now contesting as BJP candidates in the byelections. They were all elected Congress MLAs in the 2022 Assembly election.

At Panoh village in Kutlehar, Rakesh Kumar, who runs a welding shop on the busy Una-Amb stretch, says he has been hurt by the behaviour of the legislators who betrayed their party and the people. "Davinder Bhutto won on Congress ticket from here [Kutlehar] in 2022, and later he joined the BJP. And now he is contesting as the BJP candidate. This is complete betrayal of the people's vote, besides disloyalty to their mother party," he said, while awaiting customers amid soaring mercury even as the campaigning hit top gear in the constituencies.

"It's not just me, many in my village feel that way. In Himachal, which is called '*Dev Bhoomi*', the majority of people are godfearing, and the action of betrayal of any kind is considered nothing short of a sin. I am sure they will suffer politically in this byelection," he adds.

At the main market in Jhalera, a grocery shop owner, who doesn't want to reveal his name, expresses similar sentiments. "It was wrong on the part of the Congress MLAs to switch the party, and now contesting on BJP ticket has sent a bad message. People voted and elected them in 2022 for a term of five years, who gave them the authority to quit only after a year or so?" he quipped.

Political turbulence

Earlier this year, the State saw political turbulence as cracks in the Congress's State unit came to the fore during the Rajya Sabha election, resulting in the defeat of official Congress candidate Abhishek Manu Singhvi due to cross-voting by six MLAs of the ruling party.

As intense electoral campaigning is under way, addressing a gathering at Bangana, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu asserts that the people of the State have elected the present Congress government and it will complete its tenure.

Hitting out at the "turncoats", he said, "Some Congress MLAs sold their souls. They all played with the sentiments of the people of the State and won't be spared even by the Almighty. They were not alone, the BJP was also behind them as it attempted to destabilise and topple the Congress as their hunger for power has increased, and since the BJP could not form the government in the State based on votes, they have been attempting to grab the chair through money power," Mr. Sukhu said.

A few kilometres from the rally spot, Karan Kumar, who is a manager at a local restaurant, is annoyed with re-elections and says, "They [ex-Congress MLAs] have caused a breach of trust. Because of their actions, the elections are happening again, the financial burden will eventually be borne by taxpayers. There should be a provision that in such a situation, these legislators should be penalised."

In the Barsar Assembly constituency, Mahender Singh, a retired Subedar from the Army, and a few elderly people are enjoying their evening tea at the local stall at Bhakreri, discussing the political scenario. "I am not sure who is going to win or lose, but a majority of us believe that what Congress MLAs did was not ethical. Contesting on one party's symbol and then later leaving them to join and contest from another party is not acceptable," he said as a couple of others in the group nodded their heads in sync.

INBRIEF

Aurobindo Pharma Q4 net soars 80% on higher revenue

Aurobindo Pharma reported an almost 80% YoY jump in fourth-quarter consolidated net profit to ₹907.35 crore on the back of a 21% increase in revenue from formulations, while contribution of active pharmaceutical ingredients remained flat. Total revenue from operations rose 17% to ₹7,580.15 crore (₹6,472.96 crore). For the fiscal year ended March, the drugmaker registered a more than 64% increase in consolidated net profit to ₹3,168.97 crore (₹1,927.65 crore).

Divi's Labs Q4 net surges 68% to ₹538 cr. on higher revenue

Divi's Laboratories reported consolidated net profit increased almost 68% to ₹538 crore for the quarter ended March 2024 on the back of a revenue from operations that was 18% higher. Revenue from operations of the active pharmaceutical ingredients, intermediates and nutraceutical ingredients maker increased to ₹2,303 crore (₹1,951 crore). The company has declared a final dividend of ₹30 per equity share of face value ₹2 each for 2023-24.

E.I.D. Parry posts ₹294.30 cr. Q4 consolidated net profit

E.I.D. Parry India Ltd. has reported a consolidated profit after tax (PAT) for the January-March 2024 quarter at ₹294.30 crore. The Chennai-based sugar manufacturer had registered a consolidated PAT of ₹286.90 crore during the corresponding quarter of last year. For the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the consolidated profit after tax fell to ₹1,617.57 crore, from ₹1,827.74 crore registered a year earlier, the company said. PTI

LTCG liability to ease on cost inflation reset

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notifies cost inflation index (CII) for 2024-25 at 363, a 4.3% rise from FY24's 348; tax liability on the sale or transfer of any capital asset, such as land, property, trademarks and patents expected to be lower this year as a result of the reset of the CII

Shishir Sinha
NEW DELHI

Long-term capital gains liability on the sale or transfer of any capital asset, such as land, property, trademarks and patents is expected to be lower this year as the Cost Inflation Index (CII) for 2024-25 has been fixed at 363, a rise of 4.3% from 348 for FY24.

Notifying the index, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said: "This notification shall come into force with effect from the April 1, 2025 and shall accordingly apply in relation to the assessment year 2025-26 and subsequent assessment years."

The CII number assists in determining the long-term capital gains on which an assessee is required to pay taxes when she/he files income tax returns the following year.

'Real appreciation'
Explaining the importance of this index, Sandeep Sehgal, Partner-Tax, AKM Global, said, "The index is useful to adjust the capital gains for inflation so that the taxpayers are taxed on real appreciation of the assets and not the gains due to inflation. Taxpayers can use this to calculate gains for the long-term capital assets sold during FY24-25 and reduce the tax liability accordingly."

Inflation impact: Indexation helps adjust the purchase price of an asset such as property to reflect the effect of inflation on it. PTI

The CII is a way to calculate inflation, that is, an estimated increase in the price of a good or service over the years. Indexation is used to adjust the purchase price of an investment to reflect the effect of inflation on it. A higher purchase price means lower profits, which effectively means a lower tax.

Taxable income impact
With the help of indexation, one can lower her/his long-term capital gains, bringing down the taxable income. The rate of inflation to be used for indexation can be obtained from the government's CII.

The indexation was in news last year as the Finance Act, 2023 removed this for debt mutual funds. April 1 onwards, gains for funds are taxed at the investor's tax slab rate, rather than the previous 20% with indexation benefit and 10% without that. As a result, if the investor is subject to the highest tax bracket, this rate would be 35.8% (including surcharge and cess).

"This is consistent with the retail inflation rate of 4.83% recorded in April," PTI quoted Moore Singhi ED Rajat Mohan as saying.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Hyundai expects 20% of SUV sales from rural markets, says COO Garg

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Hyundai Motor India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of South Korea, said rural markets are expected to contribute 20% of its sport utility vehicle (SUV) sales in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

''Our SUV contribution from rural markets will be in the 20% range this year," Tarun Garg, Chief Operating Officer, Hyundai Motor India told *The Hindu*.

"More interestingly, rural SUV penetration and urban SUV penetration are equal now, this never happened in the past," he added. Hyundai's SUV penetration in India is one of the highest at 65% as against the industry's 51%.

Tarun Garg

The company witnessed a spike in SUV sales in April and the trend is likely to continue throughout the fiscal, he hinted.

According to Mr. Garg, Indian customers want to have more SUVs, and to cater to the diverse requirements, Hyundai has a full range of SUVs including Venue, Exter, Creta, and Alcazar in multiple variants. During FY23-24, the auto major sold 6 lakh cars, the highest ever in the country.

On the overall industry scenario, Mr. Garg said, post pandemic, the auto industry had two successive years of high growth and two successive years of highest volume growth between 2022-23 and 2023-24 with a growth of 20% and 8%, respectively.

"Most OEMs, after attending a recent conclave organised by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, felt that because of the high base of growth in the last two years, the growth in FY24-25 could be in low single-digit. April growth was only 1.7%," he commented.

'Low industry growth'
He further said that the prevailing high interest rates, geopolitical risks, high base created during FY23 and FY24 and absence of any pent up demand would mean the growth of the industry this year would be limited and in a low single digit.

Busy Bee Airways' Pitti pulls out of bidding for Go First

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Diminishing hopes of any resolution for grounded airline Go First, which had filed for bankruptcy protection in May 2023, one of the co-bidders Nishant Pitti, the Founder and CEO of EaseMyTrip.com, has pulled out from the race.

"After careful consideration, I have decided to withdraw from the GoAir [First] bid in my personal capacity," Mr. Pitti announced on Saturday.

In February 2024, the resolution professional of Go First received two financial bids for the erstwhile Wadia Group airline, which had charged its name from Go Air to Go First.

One of the financial bids was from SpiceJet's Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh in his personal capacity, along with Mr. Pitti, who owns 52% in Busy Bee Airways, in his personal capacity.

Now, with Mr. Pitti withdrawing from the bidding, Busy Bee Airways has also withdrawn from the race as a result, a spokesperson said. It is not known whether Mr. Singh would continue with his bid.

RIL seeks CCI nod for Viacom18's merger with Star India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries has sought approval from fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI) for the $8.5-billion merger of Viacom18 and Star India Pvt. Ltd. (SIPL).

"The proposed transaction aims to combine the entertainment businesses (along with certain other identified businesses) of Viacom18, part of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) group and SIPL, wholly owned by The Walt Disney Company (TWDC).

"As a result of the transaction, SIPL, currently a wholly owned entity of

TWDC through its subsidiaries, will become a joint venture (JV) which will be jointly held by RIL, Viacom18 and existing TWDC subsidiaries," RIL said in a notice filed with the CCI.

The proposed transaction will not cause any appreciable adverse effect on competition in India, RIL said in the notice.

IRDAI reduces audit firms' term to bolster audit quality

K.R. Srivats
NEW DELHI

IRDAI's new corporate governance guidelines have reduced the engagement period of statutory auditors with insurance companies. Audit firms now have a four-year term for joint statutory audits, followed by a mandatory three-year cooling-off period, according to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority's Master Circular on 'Corporate Governance for Insurers 2024'.

During this cooling-off period, outgoing auditors and their affiliates are barred from undertaking investment risk management or concurrent audits of the insurer. Additionally, incoming auditors must not include any affiliates of the retiring auditor.

Fresh review
Previously, audit firms could serve up to 10 years, but the new rules ensure a fresh review of financial statements every four years to enhance audit quality and to reduce complacency.

Commenting on the latest move by IRDAI, Jaspreet Bedi, Partner, Nangia & Co. LLP, said, "The auditor refresh policy is to promote independence, impartiality, and integrity in the audit process."

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Brazil, EU urge India to give timely notices on sugar subsidies in WTO

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A group of WTO member countries, including Brazil, Canada and the European Union, have urged India to submit timely notifications on sugar subsidies in the World Trade Organisation, an official said.

The issue came up for discussion during the meeting of the WTO's agriculture committee on May 23-24 in Geneva.

Private affair: India said its governments neither paid for nor procured sugarcane as private mills were involved. REUTERS

'Distort sugar trade'
These countries are also major sugar exporters like India and they allege that support measures by India distort global sugar trade.

Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Paraguay, New Zealand, the EU, and Guatemala have "urged India to submit timely notifications on the subsidies," the Geneva-based official said.

India has stated that the central and State governments neither paid for nor procured sugarcane from farmers, as all purchases were made by private sugar mills, hence, this information was not included in its notifications of domestic support.

The discussion assumes significance as in 2022, India has appealed against a ruling of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) trade dispute settlement panel which ruled that the country's domestic support measures for sugar and sugarcane are inconsistent with global trade norms.

The appeal was filed by India in the WTO's Appellate Body, which is the final authority on such trade disputes and is not functioning.

Brazil, Australia, and Guatemala had filed the cases against India on these support measures.

THE HINDU GROUP

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Warming climate intensifies flash droughts worldwide

The Hindu Bureau

Sudden, severe dry spells known as flash droughts are rising in intensity around the world, with a notable exception in mountainous Central Asia, where flash drought extent is shrinking, according to new research. Heat and changes to precipitation patterns caused by a warming climate are driving these trends, the study found. The new study is the first to apply a systematic, quantitative approach to the global incidence of flash drought, mapping hotspots and regions of rapid increases in recent decades.

Tracking measures

Many parts of the world have witnessed flash droughts for a longer time, with faster onset speed. The study defined and tracked three critical measures of drought severity: speed of onset, duration and geographic extent. It analyzed 40 years of NASA's MERRA-2 climate data, from 1980 to 2019, drawn from weather observations, satellite imagery and modeled root-zone soil moisture, with the aim of improving prediction and disaster preparedness. The study is published in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

South America, particularly southern Brazil and the Amazon is experiencing strong intensification in all three dimensions of flash drought, aligning with deforestation patterns in the region, high temperatures and less rain. Congo, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, and Madagascar are also hotspots. High temperatures were found to be more important than declining precipitation in the African watersheds.

Land cover is also important to flash drought vulnerability. Savanna and grasslands are more susceptible to flash droughts than other ecotypes, particularly in humid and semi-humid climates, the study found.

In Central Asian watersheds, centered on high mountains, including the Himalaya Karakoram, Tianshan and Hindu Kush, flash drought extent shrank over the study period, bucking the worldwide trend. Climate-driven changes in precipitation, melting snowpack and a shift from snow to rain in the mountains have kept soils moist. These changes can cause an increase in flash floods, which have been observed in the region.

BHU's Covaxin safety study riddled with major limitations

If the most glaring limitation of the study is the lack of a control group, the absence of data on background rates of adverse events that have been assessed in the vaccinated participants makes it difficult to link the adverse events to vaccination

R. Prasad

An observational study carried out by researchers from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi to assess the safety of Covaxin, particularly the long-term adverse events of special interest (AESIs) one year after vaccination, in adolescents and adults has been criticised by ICMR for the poor study design. However, till date, neither ICMR nor Bharat Biotech has published any Covaxin safety data after the drug regulator approved its roll-out in January 2021 in a "clinical trial mode" and wanted the vaccine recipients to be followed up for safety.

Covaxin safety study sparks controversy
The observational study assesses the adverse events of special interest (AESIs) in adolescents and adults one year after vaccination
■ The drug regulator approved the rollout of Covaxin in January 2021 in a "clinical trial mode" and the vaccine recipients were to be followed up for safety. But till date, ICMR or Bharat Biotech has not published any data on Covaxin safety in the population
■ The BHU study was carried out between January 2022 and August 2023. Covaxin safety was first assessed 14 days after vaccination
■ The study has listed numerous limitations. Many are major limitations that defeat the very purpose of undertaking the study
ICMR has criticised the study for the poor study design
■ The most glaring limitations are the lack of a control group and the absence of data on background rates of adverse events of special interest
■ Another major limitation is the failure to test the participants for SARS-CoV-2 infection/COVID-19 disease and associate all the adverse events solely to vaccination
■ Some of the AESIs in question may be due to SARS-CoV-2 infection and not the vaccination
■ Also, participants were contacted over the telephone one year after vaccination. This method, which relies on recall over a long period rather than any independent quantitative measure, can be inaccurate

Though the researchers acknowledge all the limitations of the study, which is published in the journal *Drug Safety*, many of the limitations are so critical that they defeat the very purpose of the study. "Ideally, this paper should have been rejected at the peer-review stage. Simply mentioning the limitations, some of them critical to arrive at any useful conclusion, defeats the whole purpose of undertaking the study," Dr. Vipin M. Vashishtha, director and pediatrician, Mangla Hospital and Research Center, Bijnor, says in an email to *The Hindu*. Dr. Gautam Menon, Dean (Research) & Professor, Departments of Physics and Biology, Ashoka University shares the same view. Given the limitations of the study one can "certainly say that the study can't be used to draw the conclusions it does," Dr. Menon says in an email. If the most glaring limitation of the study is the lack of a control group, the absence of data on background rates of adverse events of special interest (AESI) that have been assessed in the vaccinated participants makes it difficult to even find an association between the adverse events and the vaccine. However, Dr. Kishor Patwardhan from BHU and co-author of the paper in a tweet justifies the absence of a control group by saying that "in a longitudinal observational study, a traditional control group might not be feasible or necessary. Instead, researchers use the variability within the cohort over time to draw comparisons and identify associations".

"The lack of a control arm is a serious limitation of the study and negates any useful inference and interpretation of the study's findings. Further, they didn't try to show a real upsurge in the rates of these common ailments in the vaccinated population as the background rates are not mentioned," says Dr. Vashishtha. Dismissing Dr. Patwardhan's argument that a control group may not be necessary for a longitudinal observational study, Dr. Menon says: "If the question, as here, is the possibility of adverse effects following vaccination, it is a question about causality. To answer these, it is important to remove as many confounders as possible, such as the possibility that some fraction of participants were infected by the virus prior to or after vaccination. If, in a normal non-COVID year, an equally substantial fraction of people were afflicted by upper respiratory tract infections, that would certainly be relevant to ask if the vaccine was [indeed] responsible for the AESIs picked up by this survey." Objecting to Dr. Patwardhan's claim made in a tweet that the "goal [of the longitudinal study] is often to observe natural progressions and associations rather than to establish direct causal relationships with the use of a control group", Dr. Menon points out that the paper clearly states that "serious adverse events may occur in 1% of BBV152 [Covaxin] recipients", which is a statement of specific causality. The only robust way of linking the administration of the vaccine to a specific set of adverse effects is to have an appropriate control group, stresses Dr. Menon. Dr. Vashishtha too says that it is difficult to conclude natural progression without comparing it with the control arm.

The second critical limitation of the study is the failure to test the participants for SARS-CoV-2 infection/COVID-19 disease and associating all the adverse events solely to vaccination. Since the study lasted from January 2022 to August 2023, the chances that the participants were truly uninfected and all adverse events seen were only due to vaccination are slim. "Serological studies in Uttar Pradesh after the Delta wave point to over 80% of the population having been infected. Some of the AESIs in question could have been a consequence of an initial SARS-CoV-2 infection and not the vaccination," says Dr. Menon. Worse is when the researchers claim some of the deaths to be "possibly" associated with Covaxin even when infection/disease was not ruled out through testing or taking into account pre-existing conditions/diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. The researchers have followed the WHO classification for AEFI categories, and one of WHO's AEFI categories is coincidental reaction/event. "These deaths possibly belong to this category," says Dr. Vashishtha.

"The same group of investigators had studied the Covishield vaccine using an almost similar methodology. They found that Covishield had led to AESIs in 14%, whereas Covaxin led to AESIs in one-third of the participants of the trial. This defies logic. Globally, inactivated vaccines are considered safer than Adenovirus vector-based vaccines," adds Dr. Vashishtha.

Why mango is the king of fruits in India

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE
D. Balasubramanian

The mango season across India is on, and along with it the usual debate about which is the best mango variety to have. We in Telangana claim that the 'Banganapalli' and 'Benishan' are matchless and nothing else can come even close. My wife and her family from Gujarat say that the best is Ratnagiri or Alphonso. And friends in UP swear by the Daseri.

Mango trees are planted, and produced and the fruit is enjoyed by people in India, followed by China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Mexico. However, India leads the rest, accounting for 54.2% of the total mangoes produced worldwide. Not only do we consume the most mangoes, but we also export them. Last year, we exported 28,000 MT of mangoes and earned about 48 million dollars!

'Own special tastes'

Dr K.T. Achaya, in his "*A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*" (OUP,1998), points out that mango is native to India, grown in the northeastern hills and Myanmar, and was exported to neighbouring counties. Nowadays, mango trees are planted in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and West Bengal, with fruits from each state having their own special tastes.

India has, at the last count, over 1,000 varieties of mangoes, thanks to the ease with which grafting of mango plants occurs. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has three outstanding centres involved in mango research. In addition, the National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology in New Delhi has been analysing the genome of the mango plant to understand its basic biology. The paper from there by Dr Nagendra Singh and colleagues, titled in the *Indian Journal of the History of Science* discusses this aspect.

One mango fruit offers more Vitamins A, B, C, E and K, and metal compounds and more antioxidants than the other fruits. G N RAO

More recently, R. C. Jena and P. K. Chand have detailed the DNA marker-assisted diversity analysis of the Indian mango population (*Scientific Reports*, 2021), suggesting regional variations in the genetics and the resultant size, colour and taste.

Why is mango called the king of fruits? Across the country, apart from the seasonal mango, we find several other seasonal fruits are available and eaten. Some of these are grapes, guava, jackfruit, papaya, and orange. Some like bananas grow year-round. Yet, mango is termed the king of fruits.

The reason is that mango not only offers superb taste, but is also the healthiest of fruits, since one mango fruit offers more Vitamins A, B, C, E and K, and metal compounds (Mg, Cu, K), and more antioxidants than the other fruits. While some of these health benefits are available in several other fruits, mango leads the rest since it has the highest levels of vitamins, minerals, and fibre content. Hence the kingdom.

The website of Cleveland Clinic in the U.S. has an interesting article titled: "Mangolicious: the top six health benefits of mango", which are, first, it improves your gut health; the high fibre content helps fight constipation and bloating. Second, mangoes help control hunger, which could help you stick to your healthy eating goals.

Third, the vitamins and antioxidants in mango boost healthy hair and skin. Fourth, the soluble fibres in it help lower cholesterol. Fifth, eating mangoes controls blood pressure, and sixth, the antioxidant mangiferin, present in mangoes, helps prevent some types of cancer. The group at the University of Hyderabad also shows that mangiferin reduces ulcers.

Given all these benefits – taste, variety, availability, and health benefits – let us all go ahead and enjoy eating our favourite mangoes!

SNAPSHOTS

Antiviral neutralises many coronaviruses in mice

An experimental antiviral drug has broad antiviral potency and can combat an array of epidemic and zoonotic coronaviruses in mice, including SARS-CoV-2 and MERS-CoV. Testing the drug obeldesivir against a range of coronaviruses in culture, the scientists found it could inhibit MERS-CoV, various alphacoronaviruses that cause the common cold, and the Omicron BA.1 subvariant. It also dampened viral replication and mitigated lung injury in mice infected with the Omicron variant, MERS-CoV, or SARS-CoV

Crows demonstrate keen counting skills

Crows can control the number of vocalisations they produce, "counting" up to four in response to visual and auditory cues. The birds are capable of using a non-symbolic approximate number system, showing a level of vocal control that mirrors the early counting skills of human toddlers. The crows could produce specific numbers of vocalisations deliberately in response to specific cues. They used a non-symbolic approximate number system, planning the number of vocalisations before starting.

Genome of the extinct little bush moa reconstructed

Using ancient DNA recovered from a fossil bone, scientists have reconstructed a complete genome of the little bush moa, an extinct species of flightless bird that once roamed the forested islands of New Zealand. The work allowed the scientists to determine the bird's likely population size, and even suggests that the moa's eyes could detect ultraviolet light. The moas made their homes in the island's dense forests and grasslands as recently as 700 years ago.

Question Corner

Colour blue

Is there any blue pigment with enhanced colour properties, reduced cost and lower cobalt content than cobalt blue?

The Egyptians and Babylonians used lapis lazuli 6,000 years ago. In 1802, a French chemist synthesised cobalt blue. In 2009 scientists discovered YInMn Blue, otherwise known as Oregon Blue. But most of these pigments have limitations. In 2020, researchers reported a new class of 'cool' blue colourants that are inexpensive and more environmentally friendly. For the last 200 years, cobalt blue has been a dominant commercial blue pigment because of its colour intensity, ease of synthesis and versatility. However, 33% of the colourant by mass is carcinogenic, making cobalt blue relatively expensive and environmentally harmful to produce. The Oregon State University researchers were inspired by the crystalline structure of a light-blue mineral called hibonite. The team substituted aluminum ions in hibonite with cobalt, nickel or titanium ions. The resulting series of pigments showed a range of intense blue colours, some with reddish hues.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

How will Iran President's death impact the region?

Will there be changes in Iran's foreign policy? In the domestic arena, will the status quo prevail?

Stanly Johny

The story so far:

The death of Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's President, and eight others, including Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian, in a helicopter crash on May 19, has sent shockwaves across the region. The timing of the accident was significant. Tensions remain high in West Asia, particularly after Iran launched its first direct attack on Israel in April. The war in Gaza rages on with Iran backing Hamas and other anti-Israel non-state militants in the region. At home, the regime has seen growing protests in recent years. And now, Iran has to elect a new President amid this uncertainty.

How important was Raisi?

In Iran's semi-representative theocratic system, the role of the elected president is limited compared to that of the Supreme Leader, who is appointed by a clerical body. The President's primary responsibility is to run the day-to-day affairs of the government, while critical policies and long-term strategies are set by the Supreme Leader (read 'the establishment'). But the President and his government have a say on how to implement these policies.

In the past, Iran has seen friction between the establishment and the Presidents as they tried to champion their agenda. But in Raisi, who was elected President in 2021, the establishment found a staunch ally who hardly strayed from the line set by the Supreme Leader. Raisi oversaw a marked shift from the Hassan Rouhani years when Iran pursued dialogue with the West and reached a nuclear deal in 2015 (which was sabotaged by the U.S. in 2018). During Raisi's tenure, Iran sought closer strategic and economic cooperation with Russia and China, doubled down on its support for the so-called 'axis of resistance' (non-state actors such as Hamas, Houthis and Hezbollah) and expanded the country's nuclear programme. Tehran also adopted a more aggressive policy towards Israel, which saw the April 14 drone and missile attack.

Ebrahim Raisi, a hardline cleric, an elected President and a former judicial chief who had the backing of Ayatollah Khamenei, was seen as a potential successor

Will his death alter Iran's policies?

The President's death is unlikely to bring in any serious change to Iran's foreign policy. But it is highly likely that the regime's focus would shift to the transition at home. Even before Raisi's death was formally announced, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Iranians that governance would not be disrupted. The message from the Supreme Leader is that the system reigns supreme, not individuals, and the status quo prevails. Iran has lost several high profile officials in recent years, from Qassem Soleimani, the charismatic Quds Force General, to Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the country's top nuclear scientist. But the loss of key figures does not affect the national project.

However, Raisi's death poses two succession challenges to Iran's leaders. One, it has to quickly elect the next President. The second challenge is to identify a potential successor to Mr. Khamenei. In the past, different influential clerics were seen as his prospective successors, such as Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi. Rafsanjani died in 2017 and Shahroudi in 2018. In recent years, Raisi, a hardline cleric, an elected President and a former judicial chief, was seen as a potential successor. His death leaves a huge void in the corridors of power in Tehran.

What does Raisi's death mean for India?

India has built a good relationship with Iran since the revolution of 1979. Even though trade ties have taken a beating in recent years, owing to American sanctions on Iran, both sides stayed invested in the overall bilateral partnership. One good example of this partnership is the Chabahar port project where India has made investments worth millions. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had attended Raisi's inauguration in August 2021. In January, Mr. Jaishankar travelled again to Tehran to meet its leaders at a time when Houthis, the Iran-backed Yemeni Shia militants, were carrying out attacks against vessels in the Red Sea. India had refused to join a U.S.-led coalition to attack the Houthis.

Earlier this month, India signed a long-term agreement to further develop and operate one of the two terminals of the Chabahar port, formalising a deal that has been in the works for years. On May 20, a day after the accident, Mr. Jaishankar said India and Iran reached the Chabahar agreement "because of the interest and initiative" of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Abdollahian. India was careful not to take a direct position in the West Asian crisis. When tensions broke out between Iran and Israel, India expressed deep concerns but stopped short of condemning any party. The fact that India sent Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Tehran to offer condolences shows that retaining the current momentum in ties remains a priority for New Delhi.

Why was Singapore flight turbulence severe?

How does turbulence or changes in air on the flight path affect an aircraft? Is there evidence that turbulence is increasing because of climate change? What are airlines doing to manage in-flight turbulence? What should be the takeaway from the injuries on board the Singapore flight?

Murali N. Krishnaswamy

The story so far:

On May 20-21, a Singapore Airlines flight, SQ321, with 211 passengers and 18 crew, from London's Heathrow Airport to Singapore encountered severe turbulence while over the Andaman Sea/Bay of Bengal near the Irrawaddy Basin, Myanmar. A passenger passed away and several others suffered injuries of varying degrees. The crew decided to divert the Boeing 777-312ER to Bangkok, Thailand. The United States National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is to assist Singapore's investigation – also because the aircraft is a Boeing jet.

What do we know about the incident?

Granular flight data shows the aircraft dropping rapidly before the crew began ("controlled") descent from 37,000 feet to 31,000 feet. It also shows the aircraft had had an altitude deviation prior to this.

There has been much focus on 'turbulence'. What have experts told *The Hindu*?

Turbulence occurs "by the relative movement of disturbed air through which an aircraft is flying". It could be thermal or mechanical and can happen "either within or when it is clear of cloud". Its severity depends on the "rate at which the speed or the direction of airflow/or both changes".

According to Professor Guy Gratton, Associate Professor of Aviation and the Environment at Cranfield University, U.K., turbulence is basically what happens when there is friction between airflow or wind flowing in different directions. When it involves aviation, there are two main forms, which are Clear Air Turbulence (CAT), which happens around jet streams, and the other being inside or around cumulonimbus clouds. These clouds have very strong upwards air currents in the middle and downwards air current around the outside, he explains, which can result in quite serious turbulence. The faster an aircraft is, the more severe the response to the turbulence.

'The movement of the air may be random and unpredictable, forcing the aircraft up or down, suddenly and unexpectedly'

Troubled landing: The Singapore Airline flight SQ321 on May 21. REUTERS

Prof. Richard Dale, Senior Lecturer in Aviation and Tourism at the University of West London, says turbulence consists of changes in the movement of air which the aircraft is moving through over a short distance. For example, there might be updrafts that are quickly followed by downdrafts, but also changes in the horizontal movement of the air. The movement of the air, to some degree, is random and unpredictable, although the location where turbulence will be encountered is more certain. These changes cause the lift produced by the aircraft wing to change for a short time, forcing the aircraft up or down, suddenly and unexpectedly. According to A.D. Ravishankar, former Director, Aviation Meteorology, India Meteorological Department, CAT is turbulence suffered by an aircraft above 18,000 feet.

Dr. Paul Williams, Professor of Atmospheric Science, University of Reading, U.K., says that turbulence fatalities on commercial flights are, fortunately, very rare. Turbulence on flights can be caused by storms, mountains, and strong air currents called jet streams. In this last case, it is called clear air turbulence, and can be difficult to avoid because it does not show up on the weather radar in the flight deck. He adds that a detailed analysis of the meteorological circumstances and the type of turbulence that affected the Singapore Airlines flight will take some time. He also says, "we recently discovered that severe clear air turbulence in the North Atlantic has increased by 55% since 1979. Our latest future projections indicate a doubling or trebling of severe turbulence in the jet streams in the coming decades, if the climate continues to change as we expect."

Will passenger injuries lead to litigation?

As visuals from the Singapore incident show, there has been serious injury to some passengers. Injuries occur from passengers not wearing their seat belts resulting in them being violently thrown from their seats, the overhead bins opening causing items to fall, the cabin ceiling and panels coming off and hot beverages causing burn injuries. A Singapore Airlines spokesperson has told *The Hindu* that it has adopted a more cautious approach to managing turbulence in-flight.

Turbulence injuries have resulted in the realisation that winning a turbulence claim needs skill and knowledge of the factors that caused the incident. Aviation attorneys work with aviation and weather experts to plot the aircraft's route, obtain satellite images of the weather at the time and location of the encounter, and to quickly secure airline data to help prove the claim. They even look at whether the crew knew there was bad weather ahead but decided not to deviate to save time, fuel, and airline money. In the U.S., for instance, aviation attorneys review government data and reports, Federal Aviation Administration and NTSB findings, and the airline's procedures to obtain full and fair compensation. *Magan vs Lufthansa German Airlines* is one case where a passenger was injured and won a "substantial verdict pursuant to the Montreal Convention".

What about technology in flight planning?

Bill Duncan, aviation forecast operations leader at The Weather Company (a weather forecasting and information technology company) has told *The Hindu* that there is a process behind a dispatcher or pilot planning a route, which includes meteorologists looking at flight planning guidance charts. There is also an accounting for year-round turbulence impacted by climate change. Extreme weather events have risen in severity since 2000. According to Mr. Duncan, there is no doubt that there is warming going on, which can impact and divide the jet stream. "As the jet stream buckles a bit because it is not as strong as it was in the past, you have all this energy associated with the jet stream up 30,000 feet or so, which is allowing colder air to spill south". So the world is seeing major weather events happening more often.

Aviation meteorologists use model data, weather pattern recognition, and experience to help identify these areas of potential turbulence. Pilots get reports out ahead of their route on reported turbulence, and dispatchers are in contact with local meteorologists who actively watch routes and issue Flight Planning Guidance Charts (FPGs) and Significant Meteorological Information (SIGMETs). These SIGMETs are the information that the dispatcher can relay to the pilot about hazardous weather. With improvements in technology and science, there are better numerical weather prediction models. The Weather Company, for instance, has a Global high-Resolution Atmospheric Forecasting model which simulates the physics of the atmosphere to predict the weather and also uses artificial intelligence (AI) methods that build on weather forecasts to predict turbulence and other aviation hazards. Mr. Duncan adds that machine learning algorithms and AI are being used to find the links between historical weather and observations of turbulence. Separately, over 20 airlines now participate in the International Air Transport Association's 'Turbulence Aware Platform'.

Why COVID vaccine safety needs scrutiny

Why has the Indian Council for Medical Research, which was involved in developing Covaxin, the indigenous COVID vaccine together with Bharat Biotech, criticised a BHU study? What are the key findings? Why should examining vaccine safety be a priority?

Ramya Kannan

The story so far:

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) issued a letter to the researchers of Banaras Hindu University last week, countering their study on the side effects of India's indigenous vaccine for COVID – Covaxin. In a rejoinder sent a couple of days after the publication of the research paper in a peer-reviewed journal, ICMR head Rajiv Bahl claimed that his institution had been incorrectly and misleadingly acknowledged in the paper. He pointed out what he called 'critical flaws' in the 'poorly-designed study'. Notably, the ICMR was involved in developing Covaxin along with Bharat Biotech.

What did the BHU study conclude?

Adolescent girls and those with co-morbidities were at a higher risk of adverse events after receiving Bharat Biotech's BBV152 (Covaxin) vaccine against COVID-19, BHU researchers said. Nearly a third of the participants reported adverse events of special interest (AESI). The one-year observational, follow-up study titled 'Long-term safety analysis of the BBV152 coronavirus vaccine [Covaxin] in adolescents and adults: Findings from a one-year prospective study in North India', also said that serious adverse events occurred in 1% of BBV152 recipients, and that extended surveillance is warranted following the vaccine administration.

'We were hoping and expecting that ICMR would build upon BHU study on vaccine side-effects'

Safety concerns: A nurse about to administer the Covaxin vaccine. FILE PHOTO

Viral upper respiratory tract infections were reported in 47.9% adolescents and 42.6% adults, as per the study. New onset skin and subcutaneous disorders, general disorders, and nervous system disorders were the common AESIs in adolescents. General disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, and nervous system disorders were the common AESIs in adults. Menstrual abnormalities were noticed in 4.6% of female participants. Ocular abnormalities and hypothyroidism were observed in 2.7% and 0.6% of the participants, respectively. Among the serious AESIs (1%), stroke and Guillain-Barre syndrome were identified in 0.3% and 0.1% of the participants, respectively.

In response to this, Bharat Biotech, the vaccine manufacturer which worked with the ICMR's own National Institute of Virology to develop the vaccine candidate, said for such a study in safety to be effective and informative, and for it to avoid investigator bias, some data points were also required. This included the AESI safety profile of the subjects prior to their participation in the study; a comparison of the safety profile of non-vaccinated subjects during the course of the study; a comparison of the safety profile of subjects who received other vaccines during the course of the study etc.

What did ICMR object to?

In his letter, Dr. Bahl said ICMR was not associated with the study and had not provided any financial or technical support. He alleged that the authors had acknowledged ICMR for research support without prior approval or intimation to the institution, calling this "inappropriate and unacceptable."

With reference to the study itself, he claimed there were critical flaws: the study had no control arm of unvaccinated individuals for comparison with the vaccinated group, and therefore, the reported events in the study cannot be linked or attributed to COVID-19 vaccination; it did not provide background rates of patterns observed in the general population, and thereby made it impossible to study the observed events in the post vaccination period. Further, Dr. Bahl claimed there was no baseline information of study participants; the study tool was inconsistent with the AESI as defined in the reference paper, and the method of data collection (participants were contacted over the telephone, and their responses recorded without any clinical confirmation).

He further asked the researchers to remove the acknowledgement to ICMR and publish an erratum. His letter also called to retract the paper, with a remark: "This paper implicitly makes conclusions about vaccine safety that are not supported by evidence." The BHU recorded that it had received the communique addressed to its researchers. The researchers have communicated their responses to the ICMR.

What was the fallout?

Most researchers were shocked by the response of the ICMR, terming it as "academic censorship." Multiple accounts of doctors and researchers on social media also pointed out that the ICMR developed the vaccine along with the company, and not declaring its vested interest was also a serious lapse in research terms. Among those who formulated an official response, foremost was the Universal Health Organisation (UHO), a group of researchers, doctors, and public health experts, who echoed the research ecosystem's shock at the belated denial. The UHO wrote an open letter to the ICMR stating the study filled a key gap in terms of field data, analysing the safety of Covaxin.

"While we were hoping and expecting that the ICMR would build upon this study, address its shortcomings, and elevate the standards of vaccine safety, we are aghast to come across letters sent by ICMR asking for the retraction of the paper, and threatening the authors of the study," it said. On the point of not having a control group, the letter said, it was indeed a shortcoming but had been admitted in the study itself. Besides, this actually points to the fact that it was the ICMR that has access to the data with the control group – the original phase 3 trials of Covaxin. Neither the ICMR nor the company had published the long-term safety trials, it charged. While using telephonic interviews was not ideal, it has been used by ICMR in the past, even in papers on COVID vaccines. To call for the retraction of the BHU paper on these lines was unbecoming of a scientific institution of ICMR's stature, the letter added.

A party in decline

African National Congress

Nelson Mandela's party, which has been in power in South Africa for three decades after the transition from Apartheid, faces its biggest electoral test amid rampant poverty, widening inequality and intra-party factionalism

Srinivasan Ramani

Even as elections in India are drawing to a close, the citizens of yet another BRICS country and emerging economy are going to the polls on May 29. The largest country in GDP (nominal) terms in Africa, South Africa has been ruled for three decades by the party that was most associated with the anti-Apartheid struggle – the African National Congress (ANC).

Identified with leaders such as Nobel prize winning Nelson Mandela, who went on to become the first President of racially-integrated South Africa, the ANC has maintained its dominance as the party of governance in the country, so much so that political observers have termed the ANC's rule in South Africa one of a dominant party presiding over a "party-state".

The ANC today is helmed by President Cyril Ramaphosa, a businessman with a long association with the party, who served as chairperson of the Constitutional Assembly after the first democratic elections in South Africa following the end of Apartheid in 1994. Mr. Ramaphosa emerged as ANC president after a strongly contested leadership race against Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who was supported by then president and widely derided to be a corrupt leader, Jacob Zuma. After the election, Mr. Zuma resigned following pressure from the party and Mr. Ramaphosa was elected unopposed as the President of South Africa by the National Assembly in February 2018.

Mr. Ramaphosa was seen by many as someone who could bring in change after Mr. Zuma's controversial years. But his government, elected in May 2019 after winning 57.5% of the votes in the general election, had to tackle many economic challenges – the outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, the inherited weaknesses in the economy and the many failures of state-owned enterprises.

As a party leader, he also had to confront a leadership that included heavyweights who were associated with Mr. Zuma. In July 2021, when Mr. Zuma refused to comply with a summons order from a Constitutional Court that was set up to inquire into allegations of "state capture" and "fraud" in the public sector during his tenure, he was sentenced to 15 months of imprisonment. Mr. Zuma went on to announce that he would be voting for the newly formed party, the uMkhonto we Sizwe (named after the armed organisation affiliated to the ANC during the anti-Apartheid struggle) in the 2024 elections despite being a lifelong member of the ANC.

Earlier, factional troubles in the ANC had also resulted in the formation of new parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) by former ANC Youth League leaders. The EFF, which won 10.8% of the vote in the 2019 elections, retains an ideological view that is closer to some of the radical sections of the ANC and believes in measures such as nationalisation of mines, banks and other industries and appeals to unemployed youth who are not seen as ANC supporters.

While the ANC is expected to retain its presence as the single largest party in the coming elections, its performance could be dented by concerns among South Africans about persisting poverty and rising inequality. The World Bank said in 2020 that 37.9% of the population is living at international poverty levels of $3.2 per person a day with 25% (13.8 million people) experiencing food poverty. The country's Gini coefficient was 0.63 in its last measured value in 2014, showing widespread inequality.

Dampening enthusiasm

These concerns have already dampened voting enthusiasm among the ANC's core Black voters. Voter turnout in South Africa among eligible voters fell from 85.53% in 1994 to 47.28% in 2019 after a steady decline election after election, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance has also led to disillusionment with democratic institutions itself with Afrobarometer in 2021 recording that only 40% of South Africans preferred democracy over non-democratic options.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

The chief rival to the ANC in the South African party system remains the centrist Democratic Alliance, which has emphasised its opposition to what it calls the "state capture" of the ANC and its cadres and the reduction of the South African democratic system into a dominant one-party state. But it is largely seen as a party that represents the interests of the white minority and has been unable to expand its reach. Controversial views espoused by the DA's leaders on the legacy of colonialism have only increased the suspicion among Black voters.

The core support base of the ANC, despite misgivings among its voters, remain those who have experienced racism during the Apartheid era and were aware of the ANC's efforts during the struggle and many who still perceive the ANC as the only party capable of addressing the problems faced by the Black community in particular.

Formed in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress to press for rights of Black South Africans, it was renamed to its current appellation in 1923 and mostly functioned as an organisation devoted to getting legislation passed in favour of the community. But by the 1940s, with the influx of younger left-wing activists committed to mass mobilisation movements, trade union activity and resistance tactics, the ANC, under the leadership of Alfred Xuma, had become a major movement. In the 1950s, the ANC intensified its mass campaigns, which included strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience movements, and by 1955, it was a key signatory to the "Freedom Charter" that became vital to the anti-Apartheid struggle.

Tripartite Alliance

Other signatories included parties and organisations such as the South African Communist Party (SACP), the South African Indian Congress and trade unions. The SACP, along with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), remains aligned with the ANC as part of the Tripartite Alliance, which was forged in 1990 after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison.

Organisations aligned with the ANC such as the uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK or Spear of the Nation) launched an armed struggle against Apartheid in the 1960s after the ANC itself was banned and its leadership went underground. Leaders like Mandela were arrested and remained in jail for nearly three decades. Negotiations by the Apartheid regime with the ANC to end the system and transit into multi-racial democracy began in the 1980s. After the release of Mandela and the lifting of the ban on the ANC in the early 1990s, an interim Constitution was ratified. The ANC clinched a thumping victory in the 1994 elections and Mandela became President.

Mandela's government was widely popular and allowed for a peaceful transition of power. But with the party retaining a structure which is largely hierarchical that reverted to a culture of patronage on assuming power, degeneration set in over the years. Ineffective governance, economic woes and allegations of chronic corruption led to a sharp decline in the ANC's popularity, especially during the Zuma regime, with the party winning 57.5% of the vote in the 2019 elections.

With Mr. Ramaphosa being seen as unable to stem the decline and relying only on incremental steps to bring change in the party, the ANC may have to rely upon other parties in South Africa's proportional representation system to continue to stay in power.

THE GIST

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The fight goes on

Prabir Purkayastha

The *NewsClick* founder was released from jail after the Supreme Court stated that his arrest under UAPA was 'invalid in the eyes of law'

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

"The more things change the more they remain the same"– this adage by 19th century French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr possibly holds best for Prabir Purkayastha, founder of online news portal *NewsClick*.

Incarcerated twice, half a century apart, during two very different time periods in India's political history, Mr. Purkayastha has had a long career as a public intellectual. He has been an advocate for self-reliance, an activist in the literacy and free software movements and an expert in the power and telecom sectors, besides being a journalist.

His two prison sojourns – first under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during Emergency in 1975 and then in 2023 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) have brought his life and work into spotlight. "Prabir has been a lifelong activist. I have been making the argument in public on several occasions. I have been saying why was he jailed is because he is a good citizen," says Sudhanva Deshpande, a theatre personality and a close associate of Mr. Purkayastha.

Born in 1949, Mr. Purkayastha has trained as an engineer at the universities of Calcutta and Allahabad and joined Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, as a research scholar in the School of Computers and System Sciences in 1975. It was in JNU, after Emergency was imposed by the Indira Gandhi government, where he was arrested, on September 25, in place of D.P. Tripathi in a case of mistaken identity.

According to the book *Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point*, by historian Gyan Prakash, Mr. Purkayastha had gone to JNU to carry out a strike called by the Students' Federation of India, the students wing of the CPI (M), to protest the university's action when a team of plainclothes policemen picked him up.

Cut to 2023: this time, Mr. Purkayastha was arrested by the Delhi Police Special Cell on October 3 under the UAPA. He was accused of using Chinese funding to promote "anti-national propaganda" through digital media.

Multiple journalist collectives had termed "chilling" the raids at the homes of 46 journalists, editors, writers and professionals connected to *NewsClick*, and seizure of their electronic devices, culminating in the arrest of its founder.

Scientific temper

The Supreme Court, however, on May 15 ordered his release from custody, saying it felt "no hesitation" to declare the arrest and remand of the 74-year-old journalist under the UAPA by the Delhi Police as "invalid in the eyes of law".

But what lies behind this man with these controversial prison innings is someone who colleagues and friends describe as a person committed to rationalism, scientific temper and justice for the country's most oppressed people.

"He is really funny. He has a fantastic sense of humour. I have hardly had a conversation with him without rolling up in laughter," Mr. Deshpande says.

Adds CPI(M) Politburo member Brinda Karat, who has known Mr. Purkayastha since his student days: "He has courage. That courage he has shown many times both in his political and personal life. That courage is also due to his clarity on the ideology he believes in".

Most of his friends also emphasise his commitment to enabling the use of technology by the masses.

His commitment to science can be seen in the numerous organisations he has established or is part of whose objective is to promote scientific temper among people. He is co-convenor of the Just Net Coalition, a global coalition on internet governance, data privacy and digital independence. He is a founder member of the Delhi Science Forum and the All India People's Science Network. He is also president of Free Software Movement of India, set up in 2010.

Mr Purkayastha had also filed a number of Public Interest Litigations (PILs) to safeguard India's interests in the telecom sector.

The title of his autobiography, *Keeping up the Good Fight–From the Emergency to the Present Day,* seems to be the best way to describe his life's journey.

Man on a mission

Karim Khan

The ICC chief prosecutor says the leaders of Hamas and the Israeli government have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity

Aaratrika Bhaumik

ILLUSTRATIONS: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

When Karim A.A. Khan was sworn in as the chief public prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in June 2021, he famously said the Court should be judged by its act – "the proof of the pudding should be in the eating". By announcing his decision on May 20 to apply for arrest warrants against both the leadership of Hamas and Israel, Mr. Khan seems to have taken an indelible step towards demanding accountability for the Israel-Hamas war.

In an unprecedented event in the history of the World Court, often ridiculed for its glacial slowness, the prosecutor said there are reasonable grounds to believe that three of Hamas's most senior leaders – Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh – along with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In an international law career spanning decades, the British litigator of Pakistani origin has crafted a reputation as a gifted orator and a formidable prosecutor. Mr. Khan has partly credited his early interest in international human rights to his experience of doing voluntary work with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a persecuted sect of Islam, of which he is a member. Before his stint at the ICC, Mr. Khan was a special adviser to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and served for both the defence and the prosecution at several international courts. He was involved in investigating war crimes committed in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Cambodia and Lebanon, and also led the UN team investigating crimes committed by the Islamic State terrorist group.

The 54-year-old has faced controversies throughout a career that included stints defending Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of the late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, and Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia who was convicted of war crimes in Sierra Leone. In 2016, the ICC dropped crimes against humanity charges against his client Kenya's President William Ruto after what was described as a "troubling incidence of witness interference and intolerable political meddling". A key witness in the case had been killed two years ago.

The prosecutor was originally not on the shortlist for the ICC role but was later included following discreet lobbying by British bureaucrats and Kenyan officials. The Kenyan government's campaign for Mr. Khan's candidacy was attributed to his trenchant defence of its Premier.

Pursuing accountability

Mr. Khan seems to be a man on a mission to establish the ICC's legitimacy in pursuing accountability from heads of state without fear or favour. Responding swiftly to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, he sought arrest warrants against Russian President Vladimir Putin and senior Kremlin official Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova last year over their alleged role in the deportation of Ukrainian children.

The decision to seek warrants against Israel's leadership with staunch opposition from the U.S. and other Western states is a resounding retort to criticism that the Court is biased against African nations where so many of its cases have been focused. While U.S. President Joe Biden has called the move "outrageous", a dozen Republican senators in April this year, penned a chilling letter "warning" Mr. Khan of consequences after reports began to circulate that such a decision was imminent. But the ICC prosecutor remains undeterred telling CNN that the decision is "not a witch hunt" but in accordance with what is expected from an independent Court.

Well aware of the political ramifications, Mr. Khan has disclosed a list of distinguished experts, two of them former judges, who have backed his claims. While acknowledging that "disinformation has been rife", the experts have unanimously agreed that the prosecutor's work has been fair and rigorous. Although it remains to be seen whether the evidence will withstand scrutiny in a courtroom, the English barrister is here to challenge the long-standing scepticism against the efficacy of international law.

WASHINGTON

U.S., Chinese defence chiefs to meet following Taiwan tensions

AFP

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will meet his Chinese Admiral Dong Jun , the Pentagon announced on Friday, after Beijing carried out war games around Taiwan in a sign to the U.S.-backed democracy's new leader. The meeting will happen at the May 31 - June 2 Shangri-La Dialogue, a gathering of defence officials. AFP

KYIV

Russian strike on Kharkiv store kills two, hundreds feared inside

REUTERS

Russian strikes on a crowded DIY hardware store in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv on Saturday killed at least two persons and wounded many more. Two guided bombs hit the store in an attack which also saw 24 people injured. Officials said up to 200 people could have been in the hypermarket at the time of the strikes. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

43 Pakistan nationals to be repatriated from Sri Lankan jails

AP

The Sri Lankan government will repatriate 43 Pakistani nationals languishing in the island nation's jails. The decision was arrived at during a meeting between Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Sri Lanka's High Commissioner Admiral (Retd) Ravindra Chandra Srivijay Gunaratne on Friday. PTI

BEIJING

China and Nepal open vital, traditional border trade points

AFP

China and Nepal reopened their traditional border trade points that have played a "significant role" in fostering the development of border areas. The ceremony on Saturday in the city of Xigaze, a pivotal city for China's opening-up to South Asia, bordering India, Nepal and Bhutan, and hosting five trade land ports. PTI

'Gelephu smart city is a lifetime opportunity'

Many investors from India see the potential of the Gelephu Special Administrative Region, and they want to be the first movers, says Bhutan's Prime Minister; we are situated bang on the border with India and this is a very welcome conduit into India's vast economy and to all of South Asia and by extension to Southeast Asia, he adds

INTERVIEW

Tshering Tobgay

Suhasini Haidar

Bhutan announced this week that it will use ₹1,500 crore, part of a ₹10,000 crore outlay promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Thimphu in March, for an 'Economic Stimulus Programme' to tackle its economic challenges of slow growth, tourism downturn and unemployment. Speaking to *The Hindu* in his first interview since he was elected in January, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay said that while Bhutan's challenges are "deep", the newly-launched Gelephu carbon-negative smart-city project is a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" for Bhutan's growth.

How deep are Bhutan's economic challenges and as the new Prime Minister, how will you tackle them?

Our economic challenges are deep. However, they are not new. Manufacturing has not really slowed down. It's always been small. We need to step up manufacturing. We have taken a hit in terms of tourist arrivals, so we are working towards getting to pre-pandemic numbers and beyond that. We are quite excited now that tourism is really picking up much more quickly than I had anticipated.

When Prime Minister Modi came to Thimphu,

Tshering Tobgay

he raised Indian support for Bhutan's next five-year plans from ₹5,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore. Where do you see this extra additional outlay being spent?

About ₹8,500 crore is for our 13th five-year plan that starts on July 1 this year. Much of that money will go into infrastructure. Mr. Modi and the people of India have also very generously given us an assistance package of ₹1,500 crore and we have released details of how we will spend that [this week]. This money will be used for an 'economic Stimulus package' to get our economy back on track, particularly in terms of small businesses, and reviving the tourism and the hospitality sector.

There is much interest in the plan for the Gelephu Mindfulness City project announced by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar. How will you ensure the plan is feasible and does not become a white elephant like many mega-city projects in the region and worldwide?

If there are white elephants, they are not in Bhutan. And the reason is because we cannot afford white elephants. The King's vision of [Gelehpu] is already succeeding. And I say it's already succeeding because it has captured the imagination of the world. Many investors from India see the potential of the Special Administrative Region, Gelephu Mindfulness City, and they want to be the first movers. We are situated bang on the border with India. This is a very welcome conduit into India's vast economy and to all of South Asia and by extension to Southeast Asia.

Indian airport authorities have visited Gelephu Airport, which you need to expand. Will there be a tie-up between India and Bhutan for the development of the Gelephu airport?

Indian Airport Authority officials have visited and met officials here to discuss flight paths and aviation regulations of our respective countries. In terms of construction of the airport, right now, it's at a design phase, for an iconic airport. Once the design is complete, I'm sure the Mindfulness City Council will start inviting bids for construction.

In 2017, Bhutan refused to join Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal BBIN motor vehicles agreement when you were last in power. As Prime Minister again, do you see a chance of reviewing that?

When I was Prime Minister, we had signed on to the BBIN agreement, but our parliament did not ratify the agreement, because the people were up in arms. We are surrounded by huge populations in Nepal, India, and Bangladesh – so we cannot have an agreement that will just allow free access in and out. While we had negotiated a very generous deal from our neighbours, which would limit the number and the destinations of the vehicles, our people just were not ready. I will be very frank. I don't think we are ready even now.

Two Prime Ministerial visits already in 2024 – will there be more this year?

My next visit to Delhi I foresee as soon as the elections are over, because I wish to congratulate the incoming Prime Minister in person.

Pakistan PM to visit China next month for CPEC

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will visit China in the first week of next month to join the formal launching of the second phase of the $60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, according to a media report on Saturday.

Mr. Sharif was scheduled to leave for China on June 4.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). In CPEC-II, both countries will focus on agriculture, Main Line-I of Pakistan Railways, businessmen-to-businessmen deals and realignment of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) etc.

Israel strikes Rafah despite UN top court's orders to halt offensive

Agence France-Presse
RAFAH

Israeli air strikes and artillery pounded Rafah on Saturday, despite the UN's top court ordering an immediate halt to its military offensive in the southern Gazan city.

At the same time, renewed efforts were underway in Paris for a ceasefire in the war sparked by Palestinian militant group Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel.

In a case brought by South Africa alleging the Israeli military operation amounts to "genocide", the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to halt its Rafah offensive and demanded the immediate release of hostages still held by Palestinian militants.

Strikes were reported in Rafah, Deir al-Balah, Gaza City, Jabalia refugee camp and elsewhere

In spite of the ICJ ruling, Israel carried out strikes throughout the Gaza Strip on Saturday morning as fighting raged between the Army and Hamas's armed wing.

Witnesses reported Israeli strikes or shelling in Rafah, the central city of Deir al-Balah, Gaza City, Jabalia refugee camp and elsewhere. "We hope that the court's decision will put pressure on Israel to end this war of extermination because there is nothing left here," said a Palestinian woman from Gaza City displaced to Deir al-Balah by the war.

G-7 cites 'progress', but no deal so far on frozen Russian assets

Agence France-Presse
STRESA

G-7 Finance Ministers cited "progress" on Saturday in finding ways to use profits from frozen Russian assets to help Ukraine, envisioning a concrete proposal to present to a leaders' summit next month.

A search for creative yet legally sound solutions was top of the agenda at the two-day Group of Seven meeting in Stresa in northern Italy that wrapped up on Saturday.

They hope to present a proposal that is "defined in all its dimensions" to G-7 leaders ahead of a summit in Puglia, southern Italy, on June 13-15, Italian Finance Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti told a final press conference on Saturday.

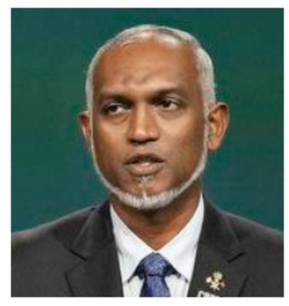
An agreed proposal "is clearly not yet finalised because it has significant technical and legal issues", Mr. Giorgetti cautioned.

Muizzu seeks easier funding to battle waves in low-lying Maldives

Agence France-Presse
MALÉ

The Maldives on Saturday demanded international funding to battle rising sea levels, saying the low-lying Indian Ocean archipelago was being unfairly excluded from the most generous support measures.

"The Maldives is liable for just 0.003% of global emissions, but is one of the first countries to endure the existential consequences of the climate crisis," President Mohamed Muizzu wrote in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper. "Wealthier nations have a moral responsibility to communities like ours."



Mohamed Muizzu

His comments came ahead of a once-a-decade conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – many of them known as luxury tourism destinations but threatened by rising sea levels, which opens on Monday.

SIDS receive "only about 14% of the finance that the least developed countries receive", he said.

Mr. Muizzu has said that his country needs about $500 million to mitigate the effects of climate change and the tourism-dependent economy was unable to raise the money on its own.

Sport

Leclerc takes pole for Monaco Grand Prix

Agence France-Presse
MONACO

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc snatched pole at his home Monaco GP on Saturday.

The grid: Front row: Charles Leclerc (Ferrari), Oscar Piastri (McLaren); **2nd row:** Carlos Sainz (Ferrari), Lando Norris (McLaren). **3rd row:** George Russell (Mercedes), Max Verstappen (Red Bull); **4th row:** Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Yuki Tsunoda (RB). **5th row:** Alex Albon (Williams), Pierre Gasly (Alpine); **6th row:** Esteban Ocon (Alpine), Nico Hulkenberg (Haas). **7th row:** Daniel Ricciardo (RB), Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); **8th row:** Kevin Magnussen (Haas), Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin). **9th row:** Logan Sargeant (Williams), Sergio Perez (Red Bull); **10th row:** Valtteri Bottas (Sauber), Zhou Guanyu (Sauber).

American dream: The Men in Blue, led by Rohit, will look to end their title drought as they depart for the T20 extravaganza. X@BCCI

First batch of Indians leave for T20 WC

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The first batch of Indian cricketers, including skipper Rohit Sharma, departed for the USA on Saturday ahead of the T20 World Cup beginning on June 2.

Apart from Rohit, the others who left for the Americas were Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel among others. Head coach Rahul Dravid and batting coach Vikram Rathour also left on Saturday.

SNAPSHOTS

Pujara slams 10th century for Sussex

LONDON: Cheteshwar Pujara scored 129 as Sussex scored a mammoth 554 for nine declared against Middlesex in a County championship Division 2 match on Saturday. This was Pujara's 65th First Class hundred, and 10th for Sussex.

Archer and Buttler star for England

BIRMINGHAM: Jofra Archer took two for 28 on his long-awaited return to international cricket to help England beat Pakistan by 23 runs at Edgbaston to move 1-0 up in the four-match T20I series.

The scores: England 183/7 in 20 overs (Jos Buttler 84, Will Jacks 37, Shaheen Afridi 3/36) bt Pakistan 160 in 19.2 overs (Fakhar Zaman 45, Reece Topley 3/41).

Indian compound teams clinch a gold and a silver medal

ARCHERY WORLD CUP

Sports Bureau

V. Jyothi Surekha helped the Indian compound teams win a gold and a silver in the Archery World Cup Stage-2 at Yecheon (South Korea) on Saturday.

The World champion trio of Jyothi, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur shot good scores consistently to beat Turkey, consisting of Hazal Burun, Ayse Suzer and Begum Yuva, 232-226 in the final and get India its second successive women's team title.

The Indian side showed its supremacy by winning three out of four ends, barring the third where the two teams shared points with a 58-58 tie. Jyothi and Priyansh gave USA, comprising Olivia Dean and Sawyer Sullivan, a strong challenge before losing 155-153 in the mixed team final and finishing with silver.

On target: Parneet, along with Jyothi and Aditi, took India to its second successive women's team title.

Prathamesh Fuge lost his semifinal 148-143 to American James Lutz and the eventual bronze medal contest to Dutchman Mike Schloesser 148-148 (shoot-off: 10-9) to finish without a medal in the compound men's individual event.

Girona ends with 7-0 thumping of Granada

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
BARCELONA

Girona rounded off its brilliant LaLiga season with a 7-0 thrashing of relegated Granada on Friday, as Artem Dovbyk retook the lead in the league's goal-scoring charts with a hat-trick.

Michel's side was already guaranteed to finish third before kick-off, behind champion Real Madrid and Barcelona.

The results: On Friday: LaLiga: Girona 7 (Garcia 30, Tsygankov 33, 54, Dovbyk 44-pen, 75, 90-pen, Stuani 78) bt Granada 0. **Serie A:** Genoa 2 (Malinovskyi 13, Vitinha 59) bt Bologna 0.

TALL LEADER

Cummins is a practical guy, not into big team meetings: Helmot

M. VEDHAN

SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot lauded Pat Cummins' leadership qualities, and also said that the Aussie was not into big team meetings. "He's a practical guy, very humble, very empathetic towards his teammates and coaching staff. I think our team meeting on Saturday went for 35 seconds," said Helmot.

TWO TO TANGO

Narine, Varun have been spot-on in executing their plans: Shreyas

K.R. DEEPAK

KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer praised his spinners Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy, saying they could be the key in the final. "They have been the wicket-takers and they have been spot-on in terms of executing their plans. In the middle overs, they also control the runs. If they execute their plans well on Sunday, it would help us."

CLEAR VISION

We were pretty sure we wanted to play super aggressive: Cummins

B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Pat Cummins revealed that Sunrisers had a clear plan to be aggressive this season. "At the start, you map out the style you want to play that you think is going to give the best chance. Along the way, you're allowed to adapt to that and change some personnel. We were pretty sure we wanted to play super aggressive."

VITAL INPUTS

Gambhir adds a lot to the team, his strategies have worked: Shreyas

K. MURALI KUMAR

KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer said team mentor Gautam Gambhir's inputs have made a big difference. "He has got immense knowledge about how the game is played. He has won two titles with KKR and his strategies have worked well. He adds a lot to the team. Hopefully, we keep continuing with the same momentum."

KKR, SRH in a big bucks battle for the IPL crown

The two franchises splurged on Starc and Cummins at the auction, raising many an eyebrow only to be proven right; the league's most exciting teams will now hope for a Super Sunday

THE FINAL

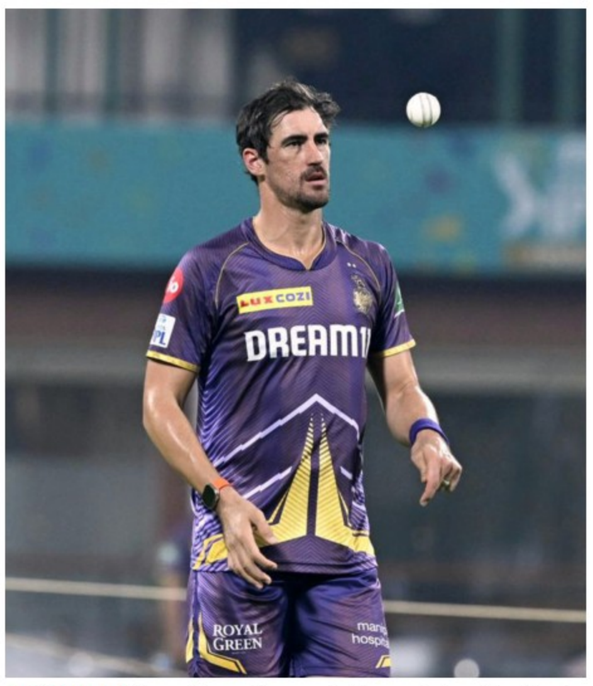
N. Sudarshan
CHENNAI

Last December, when Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins went for over ₹45 crore collectively at the auction, it looked like the Indian Premier League market had gone berserk.

Recency bias was the oft-cited explanation, for the two speedsters had played an instrumental role in Australia's 50-over World Cup win just a month earlier. It didn't matter that Starc had last played in the IPL in 2015 and Cummins a grand total of 12 IPL matches since 2020.

Kolkata Knight Riders paid a whopping ₹24.75 crores for Starc and Sunrisers Hyderabad splurged ₹20.50 crores on Cummins. Two bonafide Test greats, with enviable ODI records, had laughed their way to the bank in the bespoke world of T20 cricket.

More than five months after that frenzied afternoon in Dubai, Starc and Cummins will line up for the IPL final at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday, having proved their penny's worth and every critic wrong. Starc has scalped 15 wickets in KKR's commanding run to the summit clash while Cummins, with his midas captaincy touch, has had his best-ever IPL with 17 wickets.



Lettin' it rip! Starc will want to recreate his magic from Qualifier 1 against the same opponent. R. RAGU

It helps that both are part of robust T20 outfits. KKR, astutely led by Shreyas Iyer, last lost a match exactly a month ago and reserved its best for Qualifier 1 where it walloped SRH by eight wickets.

Sunrisers, despite being not so clinical, has redefined T20 batting this season, with Travis Head – another World Cup winner from Australia – and Abhishek Sharma pummelling many attacks into submission.

So wholesome an outfit has KKR been that even the loss of the in-form opener Phil Salt hasn't seemingly affected the balance as Afghan Rahmanullah Gurbaz shone in Qualifier 1 in his first visit to the crease.

Sunil Narine, Venkatesh Iyer and Andre Russell have come to the party when required; only Rinku Singh has remained largely subdued.

For SRH, Rahul Tripathi has thrived in three straight games and, along with Heinrich Klaasen, has bolstered the middle-order. Particularly impressive was the way R. Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal were handled in Qualifier 2. This should bode well for the team ahead of another spin test against Varun Chakravarthy and Narine.

New heroes

The biggest gain for SRH from Friday's shootout was the unearthing of new heroes, with the unheralded spin bowlers in Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek coming up with match-winning performances on a dry, deteriorating pitch. Will lightning strike twice at Chepauk?

Heavens did open on match-eve, forcing KKR to call off its practice session after a few minutes. Sun didn't beat down on Saturday as it usually does in May in these parts, but the weather remained warm and humid. As to what effect this has on the late-evening dew on matchday remains to be seen, for the absence of it in Qualifier 2 perplexed many.

However, amidst this mystery, what is certain is the fact that one of Starc and Cummins will leave the Indian shores with another colourful feather in an already ornate cap. A World Test champion, an ODI World Cup winner, a T20 World titlist will also be an IPL top dog.

PHOTO: R. RAGU

A shot at GLORY

As the top two teams in the league phase clash for the coveted prize, a look at the journeys of Knight Riders and Sunrisers, and their track record at the iconic M.A. Chidambaram Stadium

H2H IN 2024

Played	KKR	SRH
2	2	0

- KKR won by four runs (league stage)
- KKR won by eight wickets (Qualifier 1)

KNIGHT RIDERS

- CHAMPION: **2012, 2014**
- Finalist: 2021

	P	W	L
In 2024	**13**	**10**	**3**
In Chennai	1	0	1

SUNRISERS

- CHAMPION: **2016**
- Finalist: 2018

	P	W	L
In 2024	**15**	**9**	**6**
In Chennai	2	1	1

** Records pertain to completed matches*

DEFEND OR CHASE?

	BATTING FIRST		BATTING SECOND	
	P	W	P	W
KNIGHT RIDERS	9	6	4	4
SUNRISERS	9	6	6	3

- In IPL finals, on nine occasions, teams batting first have emerged victorious while there have been seven successful pursuits
- KKR has chased in all the three finals it has played. SRH has taken first strike in both its summit clashes

THE PROPELLERS

BATTING

	KNIGHT RIDERS	SUNRISERS
Most runs	Narine (482, 13 inns)	Head (567, 14 inns)
Highest	Narine (109 vs RR)	Head (102 vs RCB)
Most sixes	Narine (32)	Abhishek (42)

BOWLING

Most wickets	Varun (20, 13 inns)	Natarajan (19, 13 inns)
Best bowling	Starc (4/33 vs MI)	Natarajan (4/19 vs DC)
Most dot balls	Varun and Narine (118 each)	Bhuvneshwar (131)

THE CHEPAUK CONTESTS

	P	Won batting first	Won batting second
In 2024	**8**	**3**	**5**

RECORD IN CHENNAI

KNIGHT RIDERS
PLAYED: 14 | WON: 4 | LOST: 10

- 2012: bt CSK by five wickets (league stage)
- 2012: bt CSK by five wickets (final)
- 2021: bt SRH by 10 runs (league stage)
- 2023: bt CSK by six wickets (league stage)

SUNRISERS
PLAYED: 11 | WON: 2 | LOST: 9

- 2021: bt PBKS by nine wickets (league stage)
- 2024: bt RR by 36 runs (Qualifier 2)

Chennai has hosted two IPL finals
- 2011: CSK beat RCB by 58 runs
- 2012: KKR beat CSK by five wickets

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO
COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN & G. PRASAD

In a galaxy of stars, India's young guns shine bright

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

While the Indian Premier League is all about the big Indian names and international stars earning the big bucks, the route to a team's success runs through its Indian domestic core.

These players, some still finding their feet in big-league cricket and some on the cusp of National selection, can boost a campaign.

Opponents often try to target these so-called weak links, but many youngsters ace the challenge to play a crucial role in their teams' run to the business end of the tournament.

So, it is not surprising that the two finalists, Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad, have been blessed with some fine performances from their domestic cricketers.

While pacers Harshit Rana and Vaibhav Arora have been a revelation for KKR, Abhishek Sharma and Nitish Kumar's heroics with the bat have been crucial in SRH's progress.

"It's been huge. Some youngsters have come through and won us games on their own. Nitish and Abhishek are probably the two biggest examples of guys who are kind of away from the Indian set-up but have been fantastic," said SRH captain Pat Cummins.

Lapping it up: Abhishek has made his presence felt with the bat, ball and on the field. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

"I feel like that's been the story of our team. A lot of guys are taking the game on, putting themselves out there, and having breakout seasons," added the Australian.

KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer, too, spoke about how the domestic players have been proactive and played with freedom.

"When these guys come in, the youngsters, especially, are fearless in their approach, and their attitude is headstrong. A lot of them are versatile and enterprising in their approach and proactive," said Shreyas.

"They want to go out there and perform. So, it's just that when you give them that sort of freedom and back them during tough times, they deliver the best.

"And when these guys step up at the right time, they see that they win matches for you," he explained.

Shahbaz — a trade from RCB that has yielded rich dividends

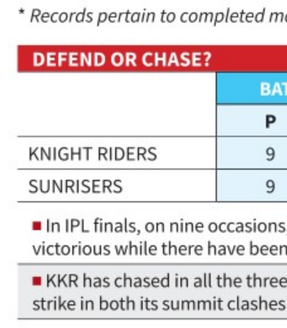
S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

An all-rounder, who might not have played if things had gone according to plan, proved the game-changer for Sunrisers Hyderabad against Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 2.

The Hyderabad outfit has played an aggressive brand of cricket all season, but the 2016 champion was struggling at one point after being six down in the 14th over.

It was here that Shahbaz Ahmed, stepping in as an Impact Player, made a significant contribution. A run-a-ball 18 is unremarkable, but his 43-run partnership with Heinrich Klaasen took the team to a fighting total.

Though the 29-year-old came in primarily for his skills as a batter, it was as a left-arm spinner that he turned the game on its head. On a surface that assisted the spinners more in the second innings – the degree of turn on offer, according to the official broadcaster, was 3.3 degrees when SRH was bowling compared to 1.8 in the first innings – the Bengal all-rounder spun his side to victory with a spell of 4-0-23-3.



Shahbaz.
EMMANUAL YOGINI

Explaining the decision to introduce Shahbaz, SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot said, "We probably had lost too many wickets, so we needed a batter to come in, and we knew how skilled Shahbaz is with the ball as well. Obviously, what he did with the ball was fantastic. He had his best day for Sunrisers."

In an astute move, SRH had recruited Shahbaz in a trade from RCB prior to the season and reaped the benefits at a crucial time.

When I raised my concern, no one agreed: Shreyas

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

After a successful ODI World Cup in 2023, when he scored 530 runs, Shreyas Iyer has had a tough few months this year.

The middle-order batter lost his place in the Indian Test team midway through the England series and subsequently lost out on his central contract as well, despite qualifying for Grade C based on the number of matches he has played.

It was widely believed that not playing domestic cricket cost him the contract. He eventually played in the semifinals and final of the Ranji Trophy during Mumbai's victorious campaign.

The 29-year-old has battled persistent back issues, and ahead of the IPL final, he spoke about the trying times he has faced in the last few months.

"I was definitely struggling after the World Cup in the longer format. When I raised my concern, no one was agreeing to it. But, at the same time, the competition was with myself.

I said so! Shreyas felt that his fitness issues weren't seen through a compassionate lens. R. RAGU

When I came, when the IPL was approaching, all I wanted was to see to it that I put my best foot forward," said Shreyas.

The Mumbai batter also spoke about how things have started falling into place since the Ranji final.

"It has been fantastic. And yeah, we won the final. I was part of the team and contributed in the final (95 in the second innings). So it gives me immense pleasure, to be honest, to be playing so well in the last few months," said the KKR skipper.

"All I did was stay in the present and not think about what would happen to me or worry about the selection processes or anything. I just wanted to come and participate and see to it that I play to the best of my abilities."

Today's match

THE FINAL

Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 27
KKR 18 | SRH 9

FORM GUIDE
(last five completed matches, latest game first)

KKR	W	W	W	W	W
SRH	W	L	W	W	L

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

INBRIEF

Manchester United stuns City to win FA Cup

Manchester United stunned Manchester City 2-1 in the FA Cup final at Wembley on Saturday, ending City's dreams of a second straight league and cup double.

Th result: Manchester City 1 (Doku 87) lost to Manchester United 2 (Garnacho 30, Mainoo 39).

Velavan, Abhay bow out in the quarterfinals of QSF 3 squash

World No. 8 Tarek Momen of Egypt defeated National champion Velavan Senthilkumar 11-9, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8 in the quarterfinals of the $53,500 QSF 3 squash, a PSA World Tour Bronze event, in Doha. Asian Games medallist Abhay Singh, ranked 67 in the world and playing his maiden World Tour quarterfinals, went down to third seed and world No. 15 Eain Yow Ng of Malaysia 6-11, 9-11, 4-11.

Australia beats India to fifth place in Junior Davis Cup

Australia defeated India 2-0 for the fifth place in the Asia-Oceania Junior Davis Cup under-16 boys tennis tournament in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Saturday. India had earlier beaten China 2-0 in the positional play-off for the fifth to eighth places.

The results: Fifth place: Australia bt India 2-0 (Cameron Burton bt Samarth Sahita 6-2, 6-3; Cruz Hewitt bt Aradhya Kshitij 6-3, 2-6, [10-7]).

Position 5-8: India bt China 2-0 (Samarth bt Zichen Shao 1-6, 7-5, 6-3; Aradhya bt Liang Liang 6-3, 6-1).

Consecutive losses for Indian women against Belgium

The Indian women's hockey team on Saturday lost to Belgium 1-2 – its back-to-back defeat to the home side – as its European leg of the FIH Pro League slipped further in Antwerp. This was the Indian women's team's seventh defeat on the trot against Belgium in all international matches.

The result: Belgium 2 (Ballenghien Ambre 14, Blockmans Vanessa 20) bt India 1 (Kumari Sangita 34).

Indian junior women's team pips Belgium in shoot-out

The Indian junior women's hockey team defeated hosts Belgium 4-2 in shoot-out here after both the sides were locked at 2-2 at the end of regulation time. Kanika Siwach scored a brace to lead India's efforts in front of the goal.

Abhimanyu beats Nikolov in the first round

National championships bronze medallist Abhimanyu Loura packed off Bulgaria's Kristiyan Nikolov 3-0 after a thrilling 80kg category first round clash in the Boxing World Qualifiers for the Paris Olympics in Bangkok on Saturday. Loura started slow as the 10-time Bulgarian national champion took an upper hand in the opening round. But the 21-year-old Indian quickly switched gears and went on the offensive in the second round and earned the bragging rights for the round with four of the five judges voting in favour of him. The Indian continued the flurry of punches in the third and final round to finally clinch the bout 3-0 and ensure two victories out of two for the Indian contingent in the Thai capital.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Conference finals, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 6 a.m.

Badminton: Singapore Open, 10.30 a.m.

Archery World Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m. onwards

Roland Garros: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m. onwards

Hockey: Pro League, India vs Argentina (Women), Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 3.30 p.m.; India vs Argentina (Men), Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 10 p.m.

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 5.30, 7.45 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

Formula One: Monaco GP, F1 TV, F1 TV Pro & FanCode, 6.30 p.m.

IPL: (final), Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)

West Indies vs South Africa: 3rd T20I, FanCode, 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

Rafael Nadal 'not 100% certain' that it is his final French Open

Defending men's champion Djokovic arrives on the back of a dry spell; Swiatek looks favoutire among the women with Sabalenka her closest rival

TENNIS

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Rafael Nadal said on Saturday that it is likely he is appearing at the French Open for the final time but cautioned it was "not 100% certain".

"There is a good chance that it will be my last French Open, but I cannot say that I am 100% certain it will be the last," said the Spaniard.

The Spaniard, a 22-time Grand Slam champion, won his first title at Roland Garros as a teenager in 2005.

Unseeded this year, his likely farewell may be brief after he was drawn to face world number four Alexander Zverev in the first round with the match set for Monday.

As well as 14 titles in Paris, Nadal can boast a record of 112 wins and just three losses, two of which came against career-long rival Novak Djokovic.

Fellow Grand Slam winners Stan Wawrinka and Daniil Medvedev practised with Nadal this week.

Wawrinka said Nadal was as "strong as ever".

Zverev has only beaten Nadal once in six clay-court meetings.

Darling of the fans: Spectators vie for Nadal's autograph after a practice match on Saturday. GETTY IMAGES

Defending champion and record 24-time Grand Slam title winner Djokovic is enduring a title dry spell unseen since 2018.

Djokovic starts his campaign on Tuesday against home wildcard Pierre-Hugues Herbert. World number two Jannik Sinner has been laid low by a hip injury which caused him to skip the Rome Open.

The 22-year-old Italian reached the quarter-finals of the French Open on his debut in 2020 where he was defeated by Nadal in straight sets.

Sinner, who faces Chris Eubanks of USA in his opener, has an extra incentive to progress deep in Paris as he could depose Djokovic as world number one.

Carlos Alcaraz, the reigning Wimbledon champion, also skipped Rome to nurse an arm injury.

Iga Swiatek said she is "confident" ahead of her bid to become only the fourth woman to win four Roland Garros singles titles in the Open era.

Swiatek is a strong favourite after dominating on clay again this season, arriving in Paris off the back of WTA 1000 victories in Madrid and Rome.

Swiatek, who faces French qualifier Leolia Jeanjean in the first round, is not daunted by what she could achieve.

Obstacle

The biggest obstacle standing in her way is Aryna Sabalenka.

Sabalenka, the two-time reigning Australian Open champion, has reached at least the semifinals in each of the past six Grand Slam events.

She is also the only woman to beat Swiatek in a final on clay.

Sabalenka opens her campaign against Russian teenager Erika Andreeva.

US Open champion Coco Gauff will be hoping to go one better than when she lost the 2022 French Open showpiece to Swiatek.

Third seed Gauff faces Russian qualifier Julia Avdeeva in the first round.

Sunday's Picks

Women
- Osaka vs Bronzetti
- 9-Ostapenko vs Cristian
- 21-Garcia vs Lys
- Siegemund vs Kenin
- 24-Krejcikova vs Golubic

Men
- Wawrinka vs Murray
- 3-Alcaraz vs Wolf
- 6-Rublev vs Daniel
- 8-Hurkacz vs Mochizuki
- 10-Dimitrov vs Kovacevic

Sindhu one step away from Malaysia Masters title

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

P.V. Sindhu on Saturday earned a shot at the $4,20,000 Malaysia Masters crown after entering the women's singles finals with a come-from-behind 13-21, 21-16, 21-12 win over Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan here.

Fifth seed Sindhu, who has not won a title in two years, rallied to prevail against the world number 20 Busanan in a marathon semifinal that lasted 88 minutes to close in on the BWF World Tour Super 500 crown

Sindhu had won the 2022 Singapore Open and finished runner-up at Madrid Spain Masters last year. It was her 18th win over Busanan, who has beaten the Indian only once in her career way back in the 2019 Hong Kong Open.

World No. 15 Sindhu, who will be eyeing her third Olympic medal at Paris, will face second seed Wang Zhi Yi of China in the summit clash. Sindhu lost to Wang at the Arctic Open last year but has defeated the Chinese twice in three meetings.

Marathon: Sindhu rallied to prevail over Busanan in a match that lasted 88 minutes. FILE PHOTO

She seemed to have found her mojo back as she dished out some attacking badminton this week after looking out of sorts since making a comeback from injury early this season.

It has been a while since Sindhu has defeated big guns such as Carolina Marin, Tai Tzu Ying, Chen Yu Fei and Akane Yamaguchi -- whom she is expected to come across at the Paris Olympics. A title triumph here will provide her a major boost ahead of the Summer Games.

Despite her overwhelming record against Busanan, it turned out to be a tough fight for Sindhu as she had to do the catching-up job, with the Thai dominating the proceedings in the opening game.

Simran Sharma wins gold, India ends sixth with 17 medals

PARA ATHLETICS

Press Trust of India
KOBE

India ended its World Para Athletics Championships campaign with unprecedented success, scooping 17 medals, including six gold, to take the sixth spot in the standings with Delhi sprinter Simran Sharma winning the country's sixth yellow metal on Saturday.

Simran won the gold medal in women's 200m T12 event with a personal best time of 24.95 seconds on the final day of competitions. She shaved off around one-fifth of a second from her earlier personal best of 25.16 seconds to win the gold.

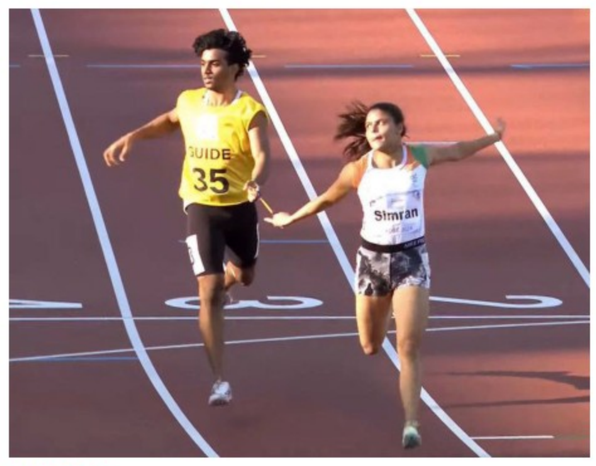
Darlenys De La Severino (25.08) of Dominica and Lorraine Gomes De Aguiar (25.40) won the silver and bronze respectively.

The T12 category is meant for athletes who have vision impairment.

India finished with 17 medals (6 gold, 5 silver, 6 bronze) to be at sixth place in the standings. This is India's best-ever performance, having surpassed the earlier record medal haul of 10 medals (3 gold, 4 silver and 3 bronze) it won in the 2023 edition in Paris.

Two other Indians also won a bronze each on Saturday. Preethi Pal won a bronze in women's 100m T35, her second medal of the championships.

Navdeep Singh added another bronze medal in the men's javelin throw F41 category with a season best performance of 42.82m.



Dominant: Simran shaved off around one-fifth of a second from her earlier personal best to win the gold. X/SAI MEDIA

The results: T12: Women's 200m: 1. Simran Sharma (24.95 seconds); 2. Darlenys de la Cruz Severino (Dom, 25.08); 3. Lorraine Gomes de Aguiar (Bra, 25.40).

T35: Women's 100m: 1. Zhou Xia (Chn, 14.06); 2. Guo Quianquian (Chn, 14.35); 3. Preethi Pal (14.43).

F41: Men's javelin: 1. Sun Pengxiang (Chn, 48.94m); 2. Sadegh Beit Sayah (Iri, 47.92); 3. Navdeep Singh (42.82).

Indian boys and girls teams triumph

Sweet win: Indian teams celebrate their victory with coaches Asha Sharma and Indra Kumar Mahajan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

The Indian boys and girls teams won the gold in the South Asia under-12 tennis championships in Kathmandu.

The boys team of Puneeth Manohar, Aarav Chhallani and Yuvaan Garg beat Pakistan 2-0 in the final, after having defeated Sri Lanka 3-0 in the semifinals.

The girls team of Srishti Kiran, Khushi Kadian and Sarena Gahlot, won the title by topping the round-robin league.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Nine-run win for BEL Colony RC

BEL Colony Recreation Club defeated Neptune CC by nine runs in the KSCA under-16 inter-club tournament here.

The scores: BEL Colony RC 210/9 in 50 overs (Mohmmed Raheel 29, Charvik 75, P.B. Chinmay 40, Vyshak Nagaraj 4/23) bt Neptune CC 201 in 49.3 overs (Ashrith Reddy 61, Vyshak Nagaraj 30, Mohammed Fairouz Khan 51, Mohammed Abdulla 29, Kushal 4/25).

Bharath CC 146 in 44.1 overs (Aadrith 37, Rohith Bharadwaj 4/15) bt City Gymkhana 136 in 43.3 overs (Tejas Subramanya 3/23, Pranith Sai Prashanth 4/21).

Chintamani Sports Association, Chintamani 74 in 21 overs (D.R. Pranav 38, Aabhav Raj 3/6, Yaeesh Rahaman 5/15) lost to Eleven Brothers CC, Magadi 77/3 in 17.3 overs.

Jawahar SC (1) 241/3 in 42 overs (Tej Jaganath 61, Sameer Deepak Godhi 107, M.C. Mourya 48) bt Malleswaram Gymkhana 176 in 41.5 overs (Mohammed Ishaan 55, Anuj Sah 54 n.o., Preet Jain 4/37, Sampathkumar Bevoor 3/20).

Gandhinagar Cricketers 131 in 36.1 overs (Aditya Sahoo 27, Sai Karthik 25, Goladari Medha Venkat 27, Dhruvesh 4/20, P. Jayanth Abhiram 3/23, M.S. Kunal 3/4) lost to Cavaliers CC 135 for no loss in 19 overs (M.S. Kunal 71 n.o., Shaurya Tandon 50 n.o.).

Social Cricketers 334/7 in 50 overs (Chavanth Gowda 48, Manan Goel 32, R.A. Sriee Krish 69, Ayaan Sharmod Kumar 77, Vidhan Loyalka 29, Aarnav Ravindra Nayak 26 n.o, Yashowardhan Poddar 3/65) bt Friends XI CC, Doddaballpura 249/7 in 50 overs (Chandan Harish 61, G. Pranav 90).

Friends Union CC (2) 136 in 36 overs (Pratheet Jambagi 45, M. Srishanth 3/21) bt Engrades CC 93 in 25.2 overs (K. Nakuldev Shetty 3/14, K. Adhrit 3/18).

Play Smart tames Panthers

Play Smart took out Panthers CA in the Tiger Cup under-16 cricket tournament here.

The score: Play Smart 138 in 28.3 overs (Sriram Nikshipth 68, Jaipreeth 25, Yashika Gowda 3/27, Ziyan 3/30) bt Panthers CA 75 in 21.5 overs (Jaipreeth 3/7).

Devanga Union beats Rajmahal

Shishir's 33 points went in vain as Devanga Union defeated Rajmahal BC 76-74 in the State 'B' division basketball league here.

The results: Devanga Union 76 (Sai Satya 24) bt Rajmahal BC 74 (Shishir 33); Bharath SU 70 (Akshay 25, Nakul 17) bt Vimanapura SC 64 (Ponappa 26).

Sarathi scores Hampinagara's winner

G. Sarathi's 38th-minute goal helped Hampinagara FC defeat Freedom FC 1-0 in the BDFA 'C' division football league here.

Bharali.

Gold for Bharali in World youth weigthlifting

Sports Bureau

Bedabrat Bharali became the first Indian male lifter to win a gold medal in the World youth championships in Lima (Peru) on Friday. The 17-year-old Bharali lifted 136kg in snatch and 160kg in clean and jerk for a total of 296kg and win the men's 73kg title.

Competing in 81kg, Sairaj Pardeshi claimed bronze with 135kg.